REDGAUNTLET.

A TALE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

BY THE AUTHOR OF "WAVERLEY"

Master, go on, and I will follow thee,
To the last gasp with truth and loyalty.

As You Like it

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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LETTER I.

DARSIE LATIMER TO ALAN FAIRFORD.

Dumfries.

Cur me exanimas querelis tuis?—In plain English, Why do you deafen me with your croaking? The disconsolate tone in which you bade me farewell at Noble-House, and mounted your miserable hack to return to your law-drudgery, still sounds in my ears. It seemed to say, "Happy dog! you can ramble at pleasure over hill and dale, pursue every object of curiosity that presents itself, and relinquish the chase when it loses interest; while I, your senior and your better, must, in this brilliant season, return to my narrow chamber and my musty books."

Such was the import of the reflections with which you saddened our parting bottle of claret, and thus I must needs interpret the terms of your melancholy adieu.

And why should this be so, Alan? Why the deuce should you not be sitting precisely opposite to me at this moment, in the same comfortable George-Inn; thy heels on the fender, and thy juridical brow expanding its plications as a pun rose in your fancy? Above all, why, when I fill this very glass of wine, cannot I push the bottle to you, and say, "Fairford, you are chased!" Why, I say, should not all this be, excepting because Alan Fairford has not the same true sense of friendship with Darsie Latimer, and will not regard our purses as common, as well as our sentiments?

I am alone in the world; my only guardian writes to me of a large fortune, which will be mine when I reach the age of twenty-five complete; my present income is, thou knowest, more than sufficient for all my wants; and yet thou—traitor as thou art to the cause of friendship—doest deprive me of the pleasure of thy society, and sub-

mittest, besides, to self-denial on thine own part, rather than my wanderings should cost me a few guineas more! Is this regard for my purse, or for thine own pride? Is it not equally absurd and unreasonable, whichever source it springs from? For myself, I tell thee, I have, and shall have, more than enough for both. This same methodical Samuel Griffiths, of Ironmonger-Lane, Guildhall, London, whose letter arrives as duly as quarter-day, has sent me, as I told thee, double allowance for this my twenty-first birth-day, and an assurance, in his brief fashion, that it will be again doubled for the succeeding years, until I enter into possession of my own property. Still I am to refrain from visiting England until my twenty-fifth year expires; and it is recommended that I shall forbear all inquiries concerning my family, and so forth, for the present.

Were it not that I recollect my poor mother in her deep widow's weeds, with a countenance that never smiled but when she looked on me—and then, in such wan and woeful sort, as the sun when he glances through an April cloud,—were it not, I say, that her mild and matron-like

form and countenance forbid such a suspicion, I might think myself the son of some Indian director, or rich citizen, who had more wealth than grace, and a handful of hypocrisy to boot, and who was breeding up privately, and obscurely enriching, one of whose existence he had some reason to be ashamed. But, as I said before, I think on my mother, and am convinced as much as of the existence of my own soul, that no touch of shame could arise from aught in which she was implicated. Meantime, I am wealthy, and I am alone, and why does my only friend scruple to share my wealth?

Are you not my only friend? and have you not acquired right to share my wealth? Answer me that, Alan Fairford. When I was brought from the solitude of my mother's dwelling into the tumult of the Gaits' Class at the High School—when I was mocked for my English accent—salted with snow as an English pig—rolled in the gutter for a Saxon pock-pudding,—who, with stout arguments, and stouter blows, stood forth my defender?—why, Alan Fairford. Who beat me soundly when I brought the arrogance of an

only son, and of course a spoiled urchin, to the forms of the little republic?—why, Alan. And who taught me to pin a losen, head a bicker, and hold the bannets?—Alan once more. If I became the pride of the Yards, and the dread of the hucksters in the High-School wynd, it was under thy patronage; and, but for thee, I had been contented with humbly passing through the Cowgate Port, without climbing over the top of it, and had never seen the *Kittle nine-steps* * nearer than from Bareford's Parks. You taught me to keep my fingers off the weak, and to clench my fist against the strong,—to carry no tales out of school—to stand forth like a true man—obey the stern order of a *Pande manum*, and endure my

* A pass on the very brink of the Castle-rock, by which it is just possible for a goat, or a High-School boy, to turn the corner of the building where it rises from the edge of the precipice. This was so favourite a feat with the "hell and neck boys" of the higher classes, that at one time sentinels were posted to prevent its repetition. The manning the Cowgate Port, especially in snow-ball time, was also a choice amusement, as it offered an inaccessible station for the boys who used these missiles to the annoyance of the passengers. The gateway is now down; and probably most of its garrison lie as low as the fortress.

pawmies without wincing, like one that is determined not to be the better for them. In a word, before I knew thee, I knew nothing.

At College it was the same. When I was incorrigibly idle, your example and encouragement roused me to mental exertion, and shewed me the way to intellectual enjoyment. You made me an historian, a metaphysician, (*invita Minerva*,)—nay, by heaven! you had almost made an advocate of me as well as of yourself. Yes, rather than part with you, Alan, I attended a weary season at the Scotch Law Class; a wearier at the Civil; and with what excellent advantage, my note-book filled with caricatures of the professors and my fellow-students, is it not yet extant to testify?

Thus far have I held on with thee untired;

and, to say truth, purely and solely that I might travel the same road with thee. But it will not do, Alan. By my faith, man, I could as soon think of being one of those ingenious traders who cheat little Master Jackies on the outside of the partition with tops, balls, batts, and battledores,

as a member of the long-robed fraternity within, who impose on grown country gentlemen with bouncing brocards of law.* Now, don't you read this to your worthy father, Alan—he loves me well enough, I know, of a Saturday night; but he thinks me but idle company for any other day of the week. And here, I suspect, lies your real objection to taking a ramble with me through the southern counties in this delicious weather. I know the good gentleman has hard thoughts of me for being so unsettled as to leave Edinburgh before the Session rises; perhaps, too, he quarrels a little—I will not say, with my want of ancestry, but with my want of connections. He reckons me a lone thing in this world, Alan, and so, in good truth, I am; and it seems a reason to him why

* The Hall of the Parliament House of Edinburgh was, in former days, divided into two unequal portions by a partition, the inner side of which was consecrated to the use of the gentlemen of the law; while the outer division was occupied by the stalls of stationers, toymen, and the like, as in a modern bazaar. From the old play of the Plain Dealer, it seems such was formerly the case with Westminster-Hall. Minos has now purified his courts in both cities from all traffick but his own.

you should not attach yourself to me, that I can claim no interest in the general herd.

Do not suppose I forget what I owe him, for permitting me to shelter for four years under his roof: My obligations to him are not the less, but the greater, if he never heartily loved me. He is angry, too, that I will not, or cannot, be a lawyer, and, with reference to you, considers my disinclination that way as *pessimi exempli*, as he might say.

But he need not be afraid that a lad of your steadiness will be influenced by such a reed shaken by the winds as I am. You will go on doubting with Dirleton, and resolving these doubts with Stewart, until the cramp speech has been spoken *more solito* from the corner of the bench, and with covered head—until you have sworn to defend the liberties and privileges of the College of Justice—until the black gown is hung on your shoulders, and you are free as any of the Faculty to sue or defend. Then will I step forth, Alan, and in a character, which even your father will allow may be more useful to you than had I shared this splendid termination of your legal studies. In a

word, if I cannot be a counsel, I am determined to be a *client*—a sort of person without whom a lawsuit would be as dull as a supposed case. Yes, I am determined to give you your first fee. One can easily, I am assured, get into a lawsuit—it is only the getting out which is sometimes found troublesome;—and, with your kind father for an agent, and you for my counsel learned in the law, and the worshipful Master Samuel Griffiths to back me, a few sessions shall not tire my patience. In short, I will make my way into Court, even if it should cost me the committing a *delict*, or at least a *quasi delict*.—You see all is not lost of what Erskine wrote, and Wallace taught.

Thus far I have fooled it off well enough; and yet, Alan, all is not at ease within me. I am affected with a sense of loneliness, the more depressing that it seems to me to be a solitude peculiarly my own. In a country where all the world have a circle of consanguinity, extending to sixth cousins at least, I am a solitary individual, having only one kind heart to throb in unison with my own. If I were condemned to labour for my bread, methinks I should less regard this peculiar spe-

cies of deprivation. The necessary communication of master and servant would be at least a tie which would attach me to the rest of my kind—as it is, my very independence seems to enhance the peculiarity of my situation. I am in the world as a stranger in the crowded coffee-house, where he enters, calls for what refreshments he wants, pays his bill, and is forgotten so soon as the waiter's mouth has pronounced his "Thank ye, sir."

I know your good father would term this *Sinning my mercies*, and ask how I should feel if, instead of being able to throw down my reckoning, I were obliged to deprecate the resentment of the landlord for consuming that which I could not pay for. I cannot tell how it is; but, though this very reasonable reflection comes across me, and though I do confess that four hundred a-year in possession, eight hundred in near prospect, and the L—d knows how many hundreds more in the distance, are very pretty and comfortable things, yet I would freely give one half of them to call your father *father*, though he should scold me for my idleness every hour of the day, and to call you *brother*, though a brother whose merits

would throw my own so completely into the shade.

The faint, yet not improbable belief often has come across me, that your father knows something more about my birth and natural condition than he is willing to communicate; it is so unlikely that I should have been left in Edinburgh at six years old, without any other recommendation than the regular payment of my board to old M—— of the High School. Before that time, as I have often told you, I have but a recollection of unbounded indulgence on my mother's part, and the most tyrannical exertion of caprice on my own. I remember still how bitterly she sighed, how vainly she strove to soothe me, while, in the full energy of despotism, I roared like ten bull-calves, for something which it was impossible to procure for me. She is dead, that kind, that ill-rewarded mother! I remember the long faces—the darkened room—the black hangings—the mysterious impression made upon my mind by the hearse and mourning coaches, and the difficulty which I had to reconcile all this to the disappearance of my mother. I do not think I had

before this event formed any idea of death, or that I had even heard of that final consummation of all that lives. The first acquaintance which I formed with it deprived me of my only relation.

A clergyman of venerable appearance, our only visitor, was my guide and companion in a journey of considerable length; and in the charge of another elderly man, substituted in his place, I know not how or why, I completed my journey to Scotland—and this is all I recollect.

I repeat the little history now, as I have a hundred times done before, merely because I would wring some sense out of it. Turn, then, thy sharp, wire-drawing, lawyer-like ingenuity to the same task—make up my history as though thou wert shaping the blundering allegations of some blue-bonnetted, hard-headed client, into a condescendence of facts and circumstances, and thou shalt be, not my Apollo—*quid tibi cum lyra?*—but my Lord Stair. Meanwhile, I have written myself out of my melancholy and blue devils, merely by prosing about them; so I will now converse half an hour with Roan Robin in his stall—the rascal knows me already, and

snickers whenever I cross the threshold of the stable.

The black which you bestrode yesterday morning, promises to be an admirable roadster, and ambled as easily with Sam and the portmanteau, as with you and your load of law-learning. Sam promises to be steady, and has hitherto been so. No long trial, you will say. He lays the blame of former inaccuracies on evil company—the people who were at the livery-stable were too seductive, I suppose—he denies he ever did the horse injustice—would rather have wanted his own dinner, he says. In this I believe him, as Roan Robin's ribs and coat shew no marks of contradiction. However, as he will meet with no saints in the inns we frequent, and as oats are sometimes as speedily converted into ale as John Barleycorn himself, I shall keep a look out after Master Sam. Stupid fellow! had he not abused my good nature, I might have chatted to him to keep my tongue in exercise; whereas now, I must keep him at a distance.

Do you remember what Mr Fairford said to me on this subject,—it did not become my fa-

ther's son to speak in that manner to Sam's father's son? I asked you what your father could possibly know of mine; and you answered, "As much, you supposed, as he knew of Sam's—it was a proverbial expression." This did not quite satisfy me; though, I am sure, I cannot tell why it should not. But I am returning to a fruitless and exhausted subject. Do not be afraid that I shall come back on this well-trodden yet pathless field of conjecture. I know nothing so useless, so utterly feeble and contemptible, as the groaning forth one's helpless lamentations into the ears of our friends.

I would fain promise you, that my letters shall be as entertaining, as I am determined they shall be regular and well filled. We have an advantage over the dear friends of old, every pair of them. Neither David and Jonathan, nor Orestes and Pylades, nor Damon and Pythias—although, in the latter case particularly, a letter by post would have been very acceptable—ever corresponded together; for they probably could not write, and certainly had neither post nor franks to speed their effusions to each other: whereas yours, which

you had from the old peer, being handled gently, and opened with precaution, may be returned to me again, and serve to make us free of his Majesty's post-office, during the whole time of my proposed tour. Mercy upon us, Alan! what letters I shall have to send you, with an account of all that I can collect, of pleasant or rare, in this wild-goose jaunt of mine! All I stipulate is, that you do not communicate them to the Scots Magazine; for though you used, in a left-handed way, to compliment me on my attainments in the lighter branches of literature, at the expense of my deficiency in the weightier matters of the law, I am not yet audacious enough to enter the portal which the learned Ruddiman so kindly opened for the acolytes of the Muses.—*Vale, sis memor mei.*

D. L.

P.S.—Direct to the Post-Office here. I shall leave orders to forward your letters wherever I may travel.

LETTER II.

ALAN FAIRFORD TO DARSIE LATIMER.

NEGATUR, my dear Darsie—you have logic and law enough to understand the word of denial. I deny your conclusion. The premises I admit, namely, that when I mounted on that infernal hack, I might utter what seemed a sigh, although I deemed it lost amid the puffs and groans of the broken-winded brute, matchless in the complication of her complaints by any save she, the poor man's mare, renowned in song, that died

"A mile aboon Dundee."

But credit me, Darsie, the sigh which escaped me, concerned thee more than myself, and regarded neither the superior mettle of your cavalry, nor your greater command of the means of tra-

velling. I could certainly have cheerfully ridden on with you for a few days; and assure yourself I would not have hesitated to tax your better-filled purse for our joint expenses. But you know my father considers every moment taken from the law as a step down hill; and I owe much to his anxiety on my account, although its effects are sometimes troublesome. For example.

I found, on my arrival at the shop in Brown's Square, that the old gentleman had returned that very evening, impatient, it seems, of remaining a night out of the guardianship of the domestic Lares. Having this information from James, whose brow wore rather an anxious look on the occasion, I dispatched a Highland chairman to the livery stable with my Bucephalus, and slunk, with as little noise as might be, into my own den, where I began to mumble certain half-gnawed and not half-digested doctrines of our municipal code. I was not long seated, when my father's visage was thrust, in a peering sort of way, through the half-opened door; and withdrawn, on seeing my occupation, with a half-articulated *humph!* which seemed to convey a doubt of the

seriousness of my application. If it were so, I cannot condemn him; for recollection of thee occupied me so entirely during an hour's reading, that although Stair lay before me, and notwithstanding that I turned over three or four pages, the sense of his lordship's clear and perspicuous style so far escaped me, that I had the mortification to find my labour was utterly in vain.

Ere I had brought up my lee-way, James appeared with his summons to our frugal supper—radishes, cheese, and a bottle of the old ale—only two plates though—and no chair set for Mr Darsie, by the attentive James Wilkinson. Said James, with his long face, lank hair, and very long pig-tail in its leathern strap, was placed, as usual, at the back of my father's chair, upright as a wooden sentinel at the door of a puppet-show. "You may go down, James," said my father; and exit Wilkinson.—What is to come next? thought I; for the weather is not clear on the paternal brow.

My boots encountered his first glance of displeasure, and he asked me, with a sneer, which way I had been riding. He expected me to an-

swer, "Nowhere," and would then have been at me with his usual sarcasm, touching the humour of walking in shoes at twenty shillings a pair. But I answered with composure, that I had ridden out to dinner as far as Noble-House. He started, (you know his way,) as if I had said that I had dined at Jericho; and as I did not choose to seem to observe his surprise, but continued munching my radishes in tranquillity, he broke forth in ire.

"To Noble-House, sir! and what had you to do at Noble-House, sir?—Do you remember you are studying law, sir?—that your Scots law trials are coming on, sir?—that every moment of your time just now is worth hours at another time?—and have you leisure to go to Noble-House, sir?—and to throw your books behind you for so many hours?—Had it been a turn in the Meadows, or even a game at golf—but Noble-House, sir!"

"I went so far with Darsie Latimer, sir, to see him begin his journey."

"Darsie Latimer?" he replied, in a softened tone—"Humph!—Well, I do not blame you for being kind to Darsie Latimer; but it would

have done as much good if you had walked with him as far as the toll-bar, and then made your farewells—it would have saved horse-hire—and your reckoning, too, at dinner."

"Latimer paid that, sir," I replied, thinking to soften the matter; but I had much better have left it unspoken.

"The reckoning, sir! And did you sponge upon any man for a reckoning? Sir, no man should enter the door of a public-house without paying his lawing."

"I admit the general rule, sir," I replied; "but this was a parting-cup between Darsie and me; and I should conceive it fell under the exception of *Dochan dorroch*."

"You think yourself a wit," said my father, with as near an approach to a smile as ever he permits to gild the solemnity of his features; "But I reckon you did not eat your dinner standing, like the Jews at their Passover? and it was decided in a case before the town-bailies of Cupar-Angus, when Luckie Simpson's cow had drunk up Luckie Jamieson's browst of ale, while it stood in the door to cool, that there was no damage to

pay, because the crummie drank without sitting down; such being the very circumstance constituting *Dochan dorroch*, which is a standing drink, for which no reckoning is paid. Ha, sir! what says your advocateship (*fieri*) to that? *Exceptio firmat regulam*—But come, fill your glass, Alan; I am not sorry ye have shewn this attention to Darsie Latimer, who is a good lad, as times go; and having now lived under my roof since he left the school, why there is really no great matter in coming under this small obligation to him."

As I saw my father's scruples were much softened by the consciousness of his own superiority in the legal argument, I took care to accept my pardon as a matter of grace, rather than of justice; and only replied, we should feel ourselves duller of an evening, now that you were absent. I will give you my father's exact words in reply, Darsie. You know him so well, that they will not offend you; and you are also aware, that there mingles with the good man's preciseness and formality, a fund of shrewd observation and practical good sense.

"It is very true," he said; "Darsie was a

pleasant companion—but over waggish, over waggish, Alan, and somewhat scatter-brained. —By the way, Wilkinson must get our ale bottled in English pints now, for a quart bottle is too much, night after night, for you and me without his assistance.—But Darsie, as I was saying, is an arch lad, and somewhat light in the upper story—I wish him well through the world; but he has little solidity, Alan, little solidity."

I scorn to desert an absent friend, Darsie, so I said for you a little more than my conscience warranted; but your defection from your legal studies had driven you far to leeward in my father's good opinion.

"Unstable as water, he shall not excel," said my father; "or, as the Septuagint hath it, *Effusa est sicut aqua—non crescat.* He goeth to dancing-houses, and readeth novels—*sat est.*"

I endeavoured to parry these texts by observing, that the dancing-houses amounted only to one night at La Pique's ball—the novels (so far as matter of notoriety, Darsie,) to an odd volume of Tom Jones.

"But he danced from night to morning," re-

plied my father, " and he read the idle trash, which the author should have been scourged for, at least twenty times over. It was never out of his hand."

I then hinted that, in all probability, your fortune was now so easy as to dispense with your prosecuting the law any farther than you had done; and therefore you might think you had some title to amuse yourself. This was least palatable of all.

" If he cannot amuse himself with the law," said my father, snappishly, " it is the worse for him. If he needs not law to teach him to make a fortune, I am sure he needs it to teach him how to keep one; and it would better become him to be learning this, than to be scouring the country like a land-louper going he knows not where, to see he knows not what, and giving treats at Noble-House to fools like himself (an angry glance at poor me.) Noble-House, indeed!" he repeated, with elevated voice and sneering tone, as if there was something offensive to him in the very name, though I will venture to say that any place

in which you had been extravagant enough to spend five shillings, would have stood as deep in reprobation.

Mindful of your idea, that my father knows more of your real situation than he thinks proper to mention, I thought I would hazard a fishing observation. "I did not see," I said, "how the Scottish law would be useful to a young gentleman whose fortune would seem to be vested in England."—I really thought my father would have beat me.

"D'ye mean to come round me, sir, *per ambages*, as Counsellor Pest says? What is it to you where Darsie Latimer's fortune is vested, or whether he hath any fortune, ay or no?—And what ill would the Scottish law do to him, though he had as much of it as either Stair or Bankton, sir? Is not the foundation of our municipal law the ancient code of the Roman Empire, devised at a time when it was so much renowned for its civil polity, sir, and wisdom? Go to your bed, sir, after your expedition to *Noble-House*, and see that your lamp be burning and your book before

you before the sun peeps. *Ars longa, vita brevis*, —were it not a sin to call the divine science of the law by the inferior name of art."

So my lamp did burn, dear Darsie, the next morning, though the owner took the risk of a domiciliary visitation, and lay snug in bed, trusting its glimmer might, without further inquiry, be received as sufficient evidence of his vigilance. And now, upon this the third morning after your departure, things are but little better; for though the lamp burns in my den, and Voet on the Pandects hath his wisdom spread open before me, yet as I only use him as a reading-desk on which to scribble this sheet of nonsense to Darsie Latimer, it is probable the vicinity will be of little furtherance to my studies.

And now, methinks, I hear thee call me an affected hypocritical varlet, who, living under such a system of distrust and restraint as my father chooses to govern by, nevertheless pretends not to envy you your freedom and independence.

Latimer, I will tell you no lies. I wish my father would allow me a little more exercise of my free will, were it but that I might feel the

pleasure of doing what would please him of my own accord. A little more spare time, and a little more money to enjoy it, would, besides, neither misbecome my age nor my condition; and it is, I own, provoking to see so many in the same situation winging the air at freedom, while I sit here, caged up like a cobbler's linnet, to chaunt the same unvaried lesson from sunrise to sunset, not to mention the listening to as many lectures against idleness, as if I enjoyed or was making use of the means of amusement! But then I cannot at heart blame either the motive or the object of this severity. For the motive, it is and can only be my father's anxious, devoted, and unremitting affection and zeal for my improvement, with a laudable sense of the honour of the profession to which he has trained me.

As we have no near relations, the tie betwixt us is of even unusual closeness, though in itself one of the strongest which nature can form. I am, and have all along been, the exclusive object of my father's anxious hopes, and his still more anxious and engrossing fears; so what title have I to complain, although now and then these fears

and hopes lead him to take a troublesome and incessant charge of all my motions? Besides, I ought to recollect, and, Darsie, I do recollect, that my father, upon various important occasions, has shewn that he can be indulgent as well as strict. The leaving his old apartments in the Luckenbooths was to him like divorcing the soul from the body; yet Dr R—— did but hint that the better air of this new district was more favourable to my health, as I was then suffering under the penalties of too rapid a growth, when he exchanged his old and beloved quarters, adjacent to the very Heart of Mid-Lothian, for one of those new tenements [entire within themselves] which modern taste has so lately introduced.—Instance also the inestimable favour which he conferred on me by receiving you into his house, when you had only the unpleasant alternative of remaining, though a grown-up lad, in the society of mere boys. This was a thing so contrary to all my father's ideas of seclusion, of economy, and of the safety to my morals and industry, which he wished to attain, by preserving me from the society of other young people, that, upon my

word, I am always rather astonished how I should have had the impudence to make the request, than that he should have complied with it.

Then for the object of his solicitude—Do not laugh, or hold up your hands, my good Darsie; but upon my word I like the profession to which I am in the course of being educated, and am serious in prosecuting the preliminary studies. The law is my vocation—in an especial, and, I may say, in a hereditary way, my vocation; for although I have no' the honour to belong to any of the great families who form in Scotland, as in France, the noblesse of the robe; and with us, at least, carry their heads as high, or rather higher, than the noblesse of the sword,—for the former consist more frequently of the "first-born of Egypt,"—yet my grandfather, who, I dare say, was a most excellent person, had the honour to sign a bitter protest against the Union, in the respectable character of town-clerk to the ancient Borough of Birlthegroat; and there is some reason—shall I say to hope, or to suspect?—that he may have been a natural son of a first cousin of the then Fairford of that Ilk, who has been long

numbered among the minor barons. Now my father mounted a step higher on the ladder of legal promotion, being, as you know as well as I do, an eminent and respected Writer to his Majesty's Signet; and I myself am destined to mount a round higher still, and wear the honoured robe which is sometimes supposed, like Charity, to cover a multitude of sins. I have, therefore, no choice but to climb upwards, since we have mounted thus high, or else to fall down at the imminent risk of my neck. So that I reconcile myself to my destiny; and while you are looking from mountain peaks at distant lakes and friths, I am, *de apicibus juris*, consoling myself with visions of crimson and scarlet gowns—with the appendages of handsome cowls, well lined with salary.

You smile, Darsie, *more tuo*, and seem to say it is little worth while to cozen one's self with such vulgar dreams; yours being, on the contrary, of a high and heroic character, bearing the same resemblance to mine, that a bench, covered with purple cloth, and plentifully loaded with session papers, bears to some Gothic throne, rough with Barbaric pearl and gold. But what would you

have?—*Sua quamque trahit voluptas.*—And my visions of preferment, though they may be as unsubstantial at present, are nevertheless more capable of being realized, than your aspirations after the Lord knows what. What says my father's proverb? "Look to a gown of gold, and you will at least get a sleeve of it." Such is my pursuit; but what dost thou look to? The chance that the mystery, as you call it, which at present overclouds your birth and connections, will clear up into something inexpressibly and inconceivably brilliant; and this without any effort or exertion of your own, but purely by the good will of Fortune. I know the pride and naughtiness of thy heart, and sincerely do I wish that thou hadst more beatings to thank me for, than those which thou dost acknowledge so gratefully. Then had I thumped these Quixotical expectations out of thee, and thou hadst not, as now, conceived thyself to be the hero of some romantic history, and converted, in thy vain imagination, honest Griffiths, citizen and broker, who never bestows more than the needful upon his quarterly epistles, into some wise Alcander or sage Alquife,

the mystical and magical protector of thy destiny. But I know not how it was, thy skull got harder, I think, and my knuckles became softer; not to mention that at length thou didst begin to shew about thee a spark of something dangerous, which I was bound to respect at least, if I did not fear it.

And while I speak of this, it is not much amiss to advise thee to correct a little this cock-a-hoop courage of thine. I fear much that, like a hot-mettled horse, it will carry the owner into some scrape, out of which he will find it difficult to extricate himself, especially if the daring spirit which bore thee thither should chance to fail thee at a pinch. Remember, Darsie, thou art not naturally courageous; on the contrary, we have long since agreed, that, quiet as I am, I have the advantage in this important particular. My courage consists, I think, in strength of nerves and constitutional indifference to danger; which, though it never pushes me on adventure, secures me in full use of my recollection, and tolerably complete self-possession, when danger actual-

ly arrives. Now, thine seems more what may be called intellectual courage; highness of spirit, and desire of distinction; impulses which render thee alive to the love of fame, and deaf to the apprehension of danger, until it forces itself suddenly upon thee. I own, that whether it is from my having caught my father's apprehensions, or that I have reason to entertain doubts of my own, I often think that this wild-fire chase, of romantic situation and adventure, may lead thee into some mischief; and then what would become of Alan Fairford? They might make whom they pleased Lord-Advocate or Solicitor-General, I should never have the heart to strive for it. All my exertions are intended to vindicate myself one day in your eyes; and I think I should not care a farthing for the embroidered silk gown, more than for an old woman's apron, unless I had hopes that thou shouldst be walking the boards to admire, and perhaps to envy me.

That this may be the case, I prithee—beware! See not a Dulcinea in every slip-shod girl, who, with blue eyes, fair hair, a tattered plaid, and a willow-wand in her gripe, drives out the village

cows to the loaning. Do not think you will meet a gallant Valentine in every English rider, or an Orson in every Highland drover. View things as they are, and not as they may be magnified through thy teeming fancy. I have seen thee look at an old gravel pit, till thou madest out capes, and bays, and inlets, crags and precipices, and the whole stupendous scenery of the Isle of Feroe, in what was, to all ordinary eyes, a mere horse-pond. Besides, did I not once find thee gazing with respect at a lizard, in the attitude of one who looks upon a crocodile? Now this is, doubtless, so far a harmless exercise of your imagination, for the puddle cannot drown you, nor the Lilliputian alligator eat you up. But it is different in society, where you cannot mistake the character of those you converse with, or suffer your fancy to exaggerate their qualities, good or bad, without exposing yourself not only to ridicule, but to great and serious inconveniencies. Keep guard, therefore, on your imagination, my dear Darsie; and let your old friend assure you, it is the point of your character most pregnant with peril to its good and generous

owner. Adieu ! let not the franks of the worthy peer remain unemployed ; above all, *Sis memor mei.*

A. F.

LETTER III.

DARSIE LATIMER TO ALAN FAIRFORD.

Shepherd's Bush.

I HAVE received thine absurd and most conceited epistle. It is well for thee that, Lovelace and Belford like, we came under a convention to pardon every species of liberty which we may take with each other; since, upon my word, there are some reflections in your last, which would otherwise have obliged me to return forthwith to Edinburgh, merely to shew you I was not what you took me for.

Why, what a pair of prigs hast thou made of us!—I plunging into scrapes, without having courage to get out of them—thy sagacious self, afraid to put one foot before the other, lest it

should run away from its companion; and so standing still like a post, out of mere faintness and coldness of heart, while all the world were driving full speed past thee. Thou a portrait-painter!—I tell thee, Alan, I have seen a better seated on the fourth round of a ladder, and painting a bare-breeched Highlander, holding a pint-stoup as big as himself, and a booted Lowlander, in a bob-wig, supporting a glass of like dimensions; the whole being designed to represent the sign of the Salutation.

How hadst thou the heart to represent thine own individual self, with all thy motions, like those of a great Dutch doll, depending on the pressure of certain springs, as Duty, Reflection, and the like; without the impulse of which, thou wouldst doubtless have me believe thou wouldst not budge an inch? But have I not seen Gravity out of his bed at midnight? and must I, in plain terms, remind thee of certain mad pranks? Thou hadst ever, with the gravest sentiments in thy mouth, and the most starched reserve in thy manner, a kind of lumbering proclivity towards mischief, although with more inclination to set it a-

going, than address to carry it through; and I cannot but chuckle internally, when I think of having seen my most venerable monitor, the future President of some high Scottish Court, puffing, blowing, and floundering, like a clumsy cart-horse in a bog, where his efforts to extricate himself only plunged him deeper at every awkward struggle, till some one,—I myself for example—took compassion on the moaning monster, and dragged him out by mane and tail.

As for me, my portrait is, if possible, even more scandalously caricatured. *I* fail or quail in spirit at the upcome! Where canst thou shew me the least symptom of the recreant temper with which thou hast invested me, (as I trust,) merely to set off the solid and impassible dignity of thine own stupid indifference? If you ever saw me tremble, be assured that my flesh, like that of the old Spanish general, only quaked at the dangers into which my spirit was about to lead it. Seriously, Alan, this imputed poverty of spirit is a shabby charge to bring against your friend. I have examined myself as closely as I can, being, in very truth, a little hurt at your

having such hard thoughts of me, and on my life I can see no reason for them. I allow you have, perhaps, some advantage of me in the steadiness and indifference of your temper; but I should despise myself, if I were conscious of the deficiency in courage which you seem willing enough to impute to me. However, I suppose this ungracious hint proceeds from sincere anxiety for my safety; and so viewing it, I swallow it as I would do physic from a friendly doctor, although I believed in my heart he had mistaken my complaint.

This offensive insinuation disposed of, I thank thee, Alan, for the rest of thy epistle. I thought I heard your good father pronouncing the word Noble-House, with a mixture of contempt and displeasure, as if the very name of the poor little hamlet were odious to him, or, as if you had selected, out of all Scotland, the very place at which you had no call to dine. But if he had had any particular aversion to that blameless village, and very sorry inn, is it not his own fault that I did not accept the invitation of the Laird of Glengallacher, to shoot a buck in what he emphatically

calls " his country ?" Truth is, I had a strong desire to have complied with his Lairdship's invitation. To shoot a buck ! Think how magnificent an idea, to one who never shot anything but hedge-sparrows, and that with a horse-pistol, purchased at a broker's stand in the Cowgate ! —You, who stand upon your courage, may remember that I took the risk of firing the said pistol for the first time, while you stood at twenty yards distance ; and that, when you were persuaded it would go off without bursting, forgetting all law but that of the biggest and strongest, you possessed yourself of it exclusively for the rest of the holidays. Such a day's sport was no complete introduction to the noble *art of* deer-stalking, as it is practised in the Highlands ; but I should not have scrupled to accept honest Glengallacher's invitation, at the risk of firing a rifle for the first time, had it not been for the outcry which your father made at my proposal, in the full ardour of his zeal for King George, the Hanover succession, and the Presbyterian *faith*. I wish I had stood out, since I have gained so little upon his good opinion by submission. All

his impressions concerning the Highlanders are taken from the recollections of Forty-five, when he retreated from the West Port with his brother volunteers, each to the fortalice of his own separate dwelling, so soon as they heard the Adventurer was arrived with his clans as near them as Kirkliston. The flight of Falkirk—*parma non bene selecta*—in which I think your sire had his share with the undaunted western regiment, does not seem to have improved his taste for the company of the Highlanders; (quære, Alan, doest thou derive the courage thou makest such boast of from a hereditary source?) and stories of Rob Roy Macgregor, and Sergeant Alan Mhor Cameron, have served to paint them in still more sable colours to his imagination.

Now, from all I can understand, these ideas, as applied to the present state of the country, are absolutely chimerical. The Pretender is no more remembered in the Highlands, than if the poor gentleman were gathered to his hundred and eight fathers, whose portraits adorn the ancient walls of Holyrood; the broadswords have passed into other hands; the targets are used to cover

the butter-churns; and the race has sunk, or is fast sinking, from ruffling bullies into tame cheaters. Indeed, it was partly my conviction that there is little to be seen in the north, which, arriving at your father's conclusion, though from different premises, inclined my course in this direction, where perhaps I shall see as little.

One thing, however, I *have* seen; and it was with pleasure the more indescribable, that I was debarred from treading the land which my eyes were permitted to gaze upon, like those of the dying prophet from the top of Mount Pisgah,—I have seen, in a word, the fruitful shores of merry England; merry England! of which I boast myself a native, and on which I gaze, even while raging floods and unstable quicksands divide us, with the filial affection of a dutiful son.

Thou canst not have forgotten, Alan—for when didst thou ever forget what was interesting to thy friend?—that the same letter from my friend Griffiths, which doubled my income, and placed my motions at my own free disposal, contained a prohibitory clause, by which, reason none assigned, I was discharged, as I respected

my present safety and future fortunes, from visiting England; every other part of the British dominions, and a tour, if I pleased, on the continent, being left to my own choice.—Where is the tale, Alan, of a covered dish in the midst of a royal banquet, upon which the eyes of every guest were immediately fixed, neglecting all the dainties with which the table was loaded? This clause of banishment from England—from my native country—from the land of the brave, and the wise, and the free—affects me more than I am rejoiced by the freedom and independence assigned to me in all other respects. Thus, in seeking this extreme boundary of the country which I am forbidden to tread, I resemble the poor tethered horse, which, you may have observed, is always grazing on the very verge of the circle to which it is limited by its halter.

Do not accuse me of romance for obeying this impulse towards the South; nor suppose that, to gratify the imaginary longing of an idle curiosity, I am in any danger of risking the solid comforts of my present condition. Whoever has hitherto taken charge of my motions, has

shewn me, by convincing proofs, more weighty than the assurances which they have withheld, that my real advantage is their principal object. I should be, therefore, worse than a fool did I object to their authority, even when it seems somewhat capriciously exercised; for assuredly, at my age, I might—entrusted as I am with the care and management of myself in every other particular—expect that the cause of excluding me from England should be frankly and fairly stated for my own consideration and guidance. However, I will not grumble about the matter. I shall know the whole story one day, I suppose; and perhaps, as you sometimes surmise, I shall not find there is any mighty matter in it after all.

Yet one cannot help wondering—but, plague on it, if I wonder any longer, my letter will be as full of wonders as one of Katterfelto's advertisements. I have a month's mind, instead of this damnable iteration of guesses and forebodings, to give thee the history of a little adventure which befell me yesterday; though I am sure you will, as usual, turn the opposite end of the spy-glass on my poor narrative and reduce, *more*

tuo, to the most petty trivialities, the circumstances to which thou accusest me of giving undue consequence. Hang thee, Alan! thou art as unfit a confidant for a youthful gallant with some spice of imagination, as the old taciturn secretary of Facardin of Trebizond. Nevertheless, we must each perform our separate destinies. I am doomed to see, act, and tell;—thou, like a Dutchman enclosed in the same diligence with a Gascon, to hear, and shrug thy shoulders.

Of Dumfries, the capital town of this county, I have but little to say, and will not abuse your patience by reminding you, that it is built on the gallant river Nith, and that its church-yard, the highest place of the whole town, commands an extensive and fine prospect. Neither will I take the traveller's privilege of inflicting upon you the whole history of Bruce poniarding the Red Comyn in the Church of the Dominicans at this place, and becoming a king and patriot, because he had been a church-breaker and a murderer. The present Dumfreizers remember and justify the deed, observing, it was only a papist church—in evidence whereof, its walls have been so com-

pletely demolished, that no vestiges of them remain. They are a sturdy set of true-blue Presbyterians these burghers of Dumfries; men after your father's own heart, zealous for the Protestant succession—the rather that many of the great families around are suspected to be of a different way of thinking, and shared, a great many of them, in the insurrection of the Fifteen, and some in the more recent business of the Forty-five. The town itself suffered in the latter era; for Lord Elcho, with a large party of the rebels, levied a severe contribution upon Dumfries, on account of the citizens having annoyed the rear of the Chevalier during his march into England.

Many of these particulars I learned from Provost C——, who happening to see me in the market-place, remembered that I was an inmate of your father's, and very kindly asked me to dinner. Pray tell your father that the effects of his kindness to me follow me everywhere. I became tired, however, of this pretty town in the course of twenty-four hours, and crept along the coast eastwards, amusing myself with looking out for objects of antiquity, and sometimes making,

or attempting to make, use of my new angling-rod. By the way, old Cotton's instructions, by which I had hoped to qualify myself for one of the gentle society of anglers, are not worth a farthing for this meridian. I learned this by mere accident, after I had waited four mortal hours. I shall never forget an impudent urchin, a cow-herd, about twelve years old, without either brogue or bonnet, bare-legged, and with a very indifferent pair of breeches—how the villain grinned in scorn at my landing net, my plummet, and the gorgeous jury of flies which I had assembled to destroy all the fish in the river. I was induced at last to lend the rod to the sneering scoundrel, to see what he would make of it; and he not only half filled my basket in an hour, but literally taught me to kill two trouts with my own hand. This, and Sam having found the hay and oats, not forgetting the ale, very good at this small inn, first made me take the fancy of resting here for a day or two; and I have got my grinning black-guard of a Piscator leave to attend on me, by paying for a herd-boy in his stead.

A notably clean Englishwoman keeps this small

house, and my bed-room is sweetened with lavender, has a clean sash-window, and the walls are, moreover, adorned with ballads of Fair Rosamond and Cruel Barbara Allan. The woman's accent, though uncouth enough, sounds yet kindly in my ear; for I have never yet forgotten the desolate effect produced on my infant organs, when I heard your slow and broad northern pronunciation, which was to me the tone of a foreign land. I am sensible I myself have since that time acquired Scotch in perfection, and many a Scotticism withal. Still the sound of the English accentuation comes to my ears as the tones of a friend; and even when heard from the mouth of some wandering beggar, it has seldom failed to charm forth my mite. You Scotch, who are so proud of your own nationality, must make due allowance for that of other folks.

On the next morning I was about to set forth to the stream where I had commenced angler the night before, but was prevented, by a heavy shower of rain, from stirring abroad the whole forenoon; during all which time, I heard my varlet of a guide as loud with his blackguard jokes

in the kitchen, as a footman in the shilling gallery;—so little are modesty and innocence the inseparable companions of rusticity and seclusion.

When after dinner the day cleared, and we at length sallied out to the river side, I found myself subjected to a new trick on the part of my accomplished preceptor. Apparently he liked fishing himself better than the trouble of instructing an awkward novice, such as I; and in hopes of exhausting my patience, and inducing me to resign the rod, as I had done on the preceding day, my friend contrived to keep me thrashing the water more than an hour with a pointless hook. I detected this trick at last, by observing the rogue grinning with delight when he saw a large trout rise and dash harmless away from the angle. I gave him a sound cuff, Alan; but the next moment was sorry, and to make amends, yielded possession of the fishing-rod for the rest of the evening, he undertaking to bring me home a dish of trouts for my supper, in atonement for his offences.

Having thus got rid of the trouble of amusing myself in a way I cared not for, I turned my

steps towards the sea, or rather the Solway Frith, which here separates the two sister kingdoms, and which lay at about a mile's distance, by a pleasant walk over sandy knolls, covered with short herbage, which you call Links, and we English, Downs.

But the rest of my adventure would weary out my fingers, and must be deferred until to-morrow, when you shall hear from me, by way of continuation; and, in the meanwhile, to prevent overhasty conclusions, I may just hint to you, we are but yet on the verge of the adventure which it is my purpose to communicate.

LETTER IV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Shepherd's Bush.

I MENTIONED in my last, that having abandoned my fishing-rod as an unprofitable implement, I crossed over the open downs which divided me from the margin of the Solway. When I reached the banks of the great estuary, which are here very bare and exposed, the waters had receded from the large and level space of sand, through which a stream, now feeble and fordable, found its way to the ocean. The whole was illuminated by the beams of the low and setting sun, who shewed his ruddy front, like a warrior prepared for defence, over a huge battlemented and turretted wall of crimson and black clouds,

which appeared like an immense Gothic fortress, into which the Lord of day was descending. His setting rays glimmered bright upon the wet surface of the sands, and the numberless pools of water by which it was covered, where the inequality of the ground had occasioned their being left by the tide.

The scene was animated by the exertions of a number of horsemen, who were actually employed in hunting salmon. Ay, Alan, lift up your hands and eyes as you will, I can give their mode of fishing no name so appropriate; for they chased the fish at full gallop, and struck them with their barbed spears, as you see hunters spearing boars in the old tapestry. The salmon, to be sure, take the thing more quietly than the boars; but they are so swift in their own element, that to pursue and strike them is the task of a good horseman, with a quick eye, a determined hand, and full command both of his horse and weapon. The shouts of the fellows as they gallopped up and down in the animating exercise—their loud bursts of laughter when any of their number caught a fall—and still louder ac-

clamations when any of the party made a capital stroke with his lance—gave so much animation to the whole scene, that I caught the enthusiasm of the sport, and ventured forward a considerable space on the sands. The feats of one horseman, in particular, called forth so repeatedly the clamorous applause of his companions, that the very banks rang again with their shouts. He was a tall man, well mounted on a strong black horse, which he caused to turn and wind like a bird in the air, carried a longer spear than the others, and wore a sort of fur cap or bonnet, with a short feather in it, which gave him on the whole rather a superior appearance to the other fishermen. He seemed to hold some sort of authority among them, and occasionally directed their motions both by voice and hand; at which times I thought his gestures were striking, and his voice uncommonly sonorous and commanding.

The riders began to make for the shore, and the interest of the scene was almost over, while I lingered on the sands, with my looks turned to the shores of England, still gilded by the sun's last rays, and, as it seemed, scarce distant

a mile from me. The anxious thoughts which haunt me began to muster in my bosom, and my feet slowly and insensibly approached the river which divided me from the forbidden precincts, though without any formed intention, when my steps were arrested by the sound of a horse galloping; and as I turned, the rider (the same fisherman whom I had formerly distinguished) called out to me, in an abrupt manner, "Soho, brother! you are too late for Bowness to-night—the tide will make presently."

I turned my head and looked at him without answering; for, to my thinking, his sudden appearance (or rather I should say his unexpected approach) had, amidst the gathering shadows and lingering light, something which was wild and ominous.

"Are you deaf?" he added—"or are you mad?—or have you a mind for the next world?"

"I am a stranger," I answered, "and had no other purpose than looking on at the fishing—I am about to return to the side I came from."

"Best make haste then," said he. "He that dreams on the bed of the Solway, may wake in

the next world. The sky threatens a blast that will bring in the waves three foot a-breast."

So saying, he turned his horse and rode off, while I began to walk back towards the Scottish shore, a little alarmed at what I had heard; for the tide advances with such rapidity upon these fatal sands, that well-mounted horsemen lay aside hopes of safety, if they see its white surge advancing while they are yet at a distance from the bank.

These recollections grew more agitating, and, instead of walking deliberately, I began a race as fast as I could, feeling, or thinking I felt, each pool of salt water through which I splashed, grow deeper and deeper. At length the surface of the sand did seem considerably more intersected with pools and channels full of water—either that the tide was really beginning to influence the bed of the estuary, or, as I must own is equally probable, that I had, in the hurry and confusion of my retreat, involved myself in difficulties which I had avoided in my deliberate advance. Either way, it was rather an unpromising state of affairs, for the sands at the same time turned softer, and my footsteps, so soon as I had passed, were

instantly filled with water. I began to have odd thoughts concerning the snugness of your father's parlour, and the secure footing afforded by the pavement of Brown's Square and Scot's Close, when my better genius, the tall fisherman, appeared once more close to my side, he and his sable horse looming gigantic in the now darkening twilight.

"Are you mad?" he said, in the same deep tone which had before thrilled on my ear, "or are you weary of your life?—You will be presently amongst the quicksands."—I professed my ignorance of the way, to which he only replied, "There is no time for prating—get up behind me."

He probably expected me to spring from the ground with the activity which these Borderers have, by constant practice, acquired in all relating to horsemanship; but as I stood irresolute, he extended his hand, and grasping mine, bid me place my foot on the toe of his boot, and thus raised me in a trice to the croupe of his horse. I was scarce securely seated, ere he shook the reins of his horse, who instantly sprung forward; but annoyed, doubtless, by the unusual burthen, treat-

ed us to two or three bounds, accompanied by as many flourishes of his hind heels. The rider sat like a tower, notwithstanding that the unexpected plunging of the animal threw me forward upon him. The horse was soon compelled to submit to the discipline of the spur and bridle, and went off at a steady hand gallop; thus shortening the devious, for it was by no means a direct path, by which the rider, avoiding the loose quicksands, made for the northern bank.

My friend, perhaps I may call him my preserver,—for, to a stranger, my situation was fraught with real danger,—continued to press on at the same speedy pace, but in perfect silence, and I was under too much anxiety of mind to disturb him with any questions. At length we arrived at a part of the shore with which I was utterly unacquainted, where I alighted, and began to return, in the best fashion I could, my thanks for the important service which he had just rendered me.

The stranger only replied by an impatient "pshaw!" and was about to ride off, and leave me to my own resources, when I implored him to

complete his work of kindness, by directing me to Shepherd's Bush, which was, as I informed him, my home for the present.

"To Shepherd's Bush?" he said; "it is but three miles, but if you know not the land better than the sand, you may break your neck before you get there; for it is no road for a moping boy in a dark night; and, besides, there are the brook and the fens to cross."

I was a little dismayed at this communication of such difficulties as my habits have not called on me to contend with. Once more the idea of thy father's fire-side came across me; and I could have been well contented to have swop'd the romance of my situation, together with the glorious independence of control which I possessed at the moment, for the comforts of the chimney-corner, though I were obliged to keep my eyes chained to Erskine's Larger Institutes.

I asked my new friend whether he could not direct me to any house of public entertainment for the night; and, supposing it probable he was himself a poor man, I added, with the conscious

dignity of a well-filled pocket-book, that I could make it worth any man's while to oblige me. The fisherman making no answer, I turned away from him with as gallant an appearance of indifference as I could command, and began to take, as I thought, the path which he had pointed out to me.

His deep voice immediately sounded after me to recall me. "Stay, young man, stay—you have mistaken the road already.—I wonder your friends send out such an inconsiderate youth, without some one wiser than himself to take care of him."

"Perhaps they might not have done so," said I, "if I had any friends who cared about the matter."

"Well, sir," he said, "it is not my custom to open my house to strangers, but your pinch is like to be a smart one; for, besides the risk from bad roads, fords, and broken ground, and the night, which looks both black and gloomy, there is bad company on the road sometimes—at least it has a bad name, and some have come to

harm; so that I think I must for once make my rule give way to your necessity, and give you a night's lodging in my cottage."

Why was it, Alan, that I could not help giving an involuntary shudder at receiving an invitation so seasonable in itself, and so suitable to my naturally inquisitive disposition? I easily suppressed this untimely sensation; and, as I returned thanks, and expressed my hope that I should not disarrange his family, I once more dropped a hint of my desire to make compensation for any trouble I might occasion. The man answered very coldly, "Your presence will no doubt give me trouble, sir, but it is of a kind which your purse cannot compensate; in a word, although I am content to receive you as my guest, I am no publican to call a reckoning."

I begged his pardon once again, and, at his instance, once more seated myself behind him upon the good horse, which went forth steady as before—the moon, whenever she could penetrate the clouds, throwing the huge shadow of the animal, with its double burthen, on the wild and bare ground over which we passed.

Thou may'st laugh till thou lettest the letter fall if thou wilt, but it reminded me of the Magician Atlantes on his hipogriff, with a knight trussed up behind him, in the manner Ariosto has depicted that matter. Thou art, I know, matter-of-fact enough to affect contempt of that fascinating and delicious poem; but think not that, to conform with thy bad taste, I will forbear any suitable illustration which now or hereafter may occur to me.

On we went, the sky blackening around us, and the wind beginning to pipe such a wild and melancholy tune as best suited the hollow sounds of the advancing tide, which I could hear at a distance, like the roar of some immense monster defrauded of its prey.

At length, our course was crossed by a deep dell or dingle, such as they call in some parts of Scotland a den, and in others a cleugh, or narrow glen. It seemed, by the broken glances which the moon continued to throw upon it, to be steep, precipitous, and full of trees, which are, generally speaking, rather scarce upon these shores. The descent by which we plunged into

this dell was both steep and rugged, with two or three abrupt turnings; but neither danger nor darkness impeded the motion of the black horse, who seemed rather to slide upon his haunches, than to gallop down the pass, throwing me again on the shoulders of the athletic rider, who, sustaining no inconvenience by the circumstance, continued to press the horse forward with his heel, steadily supporting him at the same time by raising his bridle-hand, until we stood in safety at the bottom of the steep—not a little to my consolation, as, friend Alan, thou may'st easily conceive.

A very short advance, after this ugly descent, brought us in front of two or three cottages, one of which another blink of moonshine enabled me to rate as rather better than those of the Scotch peasantry in this part of the world; for the sashes seemed glazed, and there were what are called storm-windows in the roof, giving symptoms of the magnificence of a second story. The scene around seemed very interesting; for the cottages, and the yards or crofts annexed to them, occupied a *haugh*, or holm, of two acres, which

a brook of some consequence (to judge from its roar) had left upon one side of the little glen while finding its course close to the further bank, which seemed covered and darkened with trees, while the level space beneath enjoyed such stormy smiles as the moon had that night to bestow.

I had little time for observation, for my companion's loud whistle, seconded by an equally loud halloo, speedily brought to the door of the principal cottage a man and a woman, together with two large Newfoundland dogs, the deep baying of which I had for some time heard. A yelping terrier or two, which had joined the concert, were silent at the presence of my conductor, and began to whine, jump up, and fawn upon him. The female drew back when she beheld a stranger; the man, who had a lighted lantern, advanced, and without any observation, received the horse from my host, and conducted him, doubtless, to stable, while I followed my conductor into the house. When we had passed the *hallan*, we entered a well-sized apartment, with a clean brick floor, where a fire blazed (much to my contentment) in the ordinary projecting sort

of chimney, common in Scotch houses. There were stone seats within the chimney; and ordinary utensils, mixed with fishing-spears, nets, and similar implements of sport, were hung around the walls of the place. The female who had first appeared at the door, had now retreated into a side apartment. She was presently followed by my guide, after he had silently motioned me to a seat; and their place was supplied by an elderly woman, in a grey stuff gown, with a check apron and *toy*, obviously a menial, though neater in her dress than is usual in her apparent rank—an advantage which was counterbalanced by a very forbidding aspect. But the most singular part of her attire, in this very Protestant country, was a rosary, in which the smaller beads were black oak, and those indicating the *pater-noster* of silver, with a crucifix of the same metal.

This person made preparations for supper, by spreading a clean though coarse cloth over a large oaken table, placing trenchers and salt upon it, and arranging the fire to receive a gridiron. I observed her motions in silence; for she took no sort of notice of me, and as her looks were sin-

gularly forbidding, I felt no disposition to commence conversation.

When this duenna had made all preliminary arrangements, she took from the well-filled pouch of my conductor, which he had hung up by the door, one or two salmon, or *grilses*, as the smaller sort are termed, and selecting that which seemed best, and in highest season, began to cut it into slices, and to prepare a *grillade*; the savoury smell of which affected me so powerfully, that I began sincerely to hope that no delay would intervene between the platter, I must say, and the lip.

As this thought came across me, the man who had carried the horse to the stable entered the apartment, and discovered to me a countenance yet more uninviting than that of the old crone who was performing with such dexterity the office of cook to the party. He was perhaps sixty years old; yet his brow was not much furrowed, and his jet black hair was only grizzled, not whitened, by the advance of age. All his motions spoke strength unabated; and, though rather undersized, he had very broad shoulders, was square-made, thin-flanked, and apparently combining in

his frame muscular strength and activity; the last somewhat impaired perhaps by years, but the first remaining in full vigour. A hard and harsh countenance—eyes far sunk under projecting eyebrows, which were grizzled like his hair—a wide mouth, furnished from ear to ear with a range of unimpaired teeth, of uncommon whiteness, and a size and breadth which might have become the jaws of an ogre, completed this delightful portrait. He was clad like a fisherman, in jacket and trowsers of the blue cloth commonly used by seamen, and had a Dutch case-knife, like that of a Hamburgh skipper, stuck into a broad buff belt, which seemed as if it might occasionally sustain weapons of a description still less equivocally calculated for violence.

This man gave me an inquisitive, and, as I thought, a sinister look upon entering the apartment; but without any farther notice of me, took up the office of arranging the table, which the old lady had abandoned for that of cooking the fish, and with more address than I expected from a person of his coarse appearance, placed two chairs at the head of the table, and two stools below;

accommodating each seat to a cover, beside which he placed an allowance of barley-bread, and a small jug, which he replenished with ale from a large black jack. Three of these jugs were of ordinary earthenware, but the fourth, which he placed by the right-hand cover at the upper end of the table, was a flagon of silver, and displayed armorial bearings. At the upper end of the table he placed a salt-cellar of silver, handsomely wrought, containing salt of exquisite whiteness, with pepper and other spices. A sliced lemon was also presented on a small silver salver. The two large water-dogs, who seemed perfectly to understand the nature of the preparations, seated themselves one on each side of the table, to be ready to receive their portion of the entertainment. I never saw finer animals, or which seemed to be more influenced by a sense of decorum, excepting that they slobbered a little as the rich scent from the chimney was wafted past their noses. The small dogs ensconced themselves beneath the table.

I am aware that I am dwelling upon trivial and ordinary circumstances, and that perhaps I may

weary out your patience in doing so. But conceive me alone in this strange place, which seemed, from the universal silence, to be the very temple of Harpocrates—remember that this is my first excursion from home—forget not that the manner in which I had been brought hither had something the air of an adventure, and that there was a mysterious incongruity in all I had hitherto witnessed; and you will not, I think, be surprised that circumstances in themselves trifling should force themselves on my notice at the time, and dwell in my memory afterwards.

That a fisher, who pursued the sport perhaps for his amusement as well as profit, should be well mounted and better lodged than the lower class of peasantry, had in it nothing surprising; but there was something about all that I saw which seemed to intimate, that I was rather in the abode of a decayed gentleman, who clung to the forms and observances of former rank, than in that of a common peasant, raised above his fellows by comparative opulence.

Besides the articles of plate which I have already noticed, the old man now lighted and

placed on the table a silver lamp, or *cruisie*, as the Scotch term it, filled with very pure oil, which in burning diffused an aromatic fragrance, and gave me a more perfect view of the cottage walls, which I had hitherto only seen dimly by the light of the fire. The *bink*, with its usual arrangement of pewter and earthenware, which was most strictly and critically clean, glanced back the flame of the lamp merrily from one side of the apartment. In a recess, formed by the small bow of a latticed window, was a large writing-desk of walnut-tree wood, curiously carved, above which arose shelves of the same, which supported a few books and papers. The opposite side of the recess contained (as far as I could discern, for it lay in shadow, and I could at any rate have seen it but imperfectly from the place where I was seated,) one or two guns, together with swords, pistols, and other arms—a collection which, in a poor cottage, and in a country so peaceful, appeared singular at least, if not even somewhat suspicious.

All these observations, you may suppose, were made much sooner than I have recorded, or you

(if you have not skipped) have been able to read them. They were already finished, and I was considering how I should open some communication with the mute inhabitants of the mansion, when my conductor re-entered from the side door by which he had made his exit.

He had now thrown off his rough riding-cap, and his coarse jockey-coat, and stood before me in a grey jerkin trimmed with black, which sat close to, and set off his large and sinewy frame, and a pair of trowsers of a lighter colour, cut as close to the body as they are used by Highlandmen. His whole dress was of finer cloth than that of the old man; and his linen, so minute was my observation, clean and unsullied. His shirt was without ruffles, and tied at the collar with a black ribband, which shewed his strong and muscular neck rising from it, like that of an ancient Hercules. His head was small, with a large forehead, and well-formed ears. He wore neither peruke nor hair-powder; and his chesnut locks, curling close to his head, like those of an antique statue, shewed not the least touch of time, though the owner must have been at least fifty. His features

were high and prominent in such a degree, that one knew not whether to term them harsh or handsome. In either case, the sparkling grey eye, aquiline nose, and well-formed mouth, combined to render his physiognomy noble and expressive. An air of sadness, or severity, or of both, seemed to indicate a melancholy, and, at the same time, a haughty temper. I could not help running mentally over the ancient heroes, to whom I might assimilate the noble form and countenance before me. He was too young, and evinced too little resignation to his fate, to resemble Belisarius. Coriolanus, standing by the hearth of Tullus Aufidius, came nearer the mark; yet the gloomy and haughty look of the stranger had, perhaps, still more of Marius, seated among the ruins of Carthage.

While I was lost in these imaginations, my host stood by the fire, gazing on me with the same attention which I paid to him, until, embarrassed by his look, I was about to break silence at all hazards. But the supper, now placed upon the table, reminded me, by its appearance, of those wants, which I had almost forgotten while I was

gazing on the fine form of my conductor. He spoke at length, and I almost started at the deep rich tone of his voice, though what he said was but to invite me to sit down to the table. He himself assumed the seat of honour, beside which the silver flagon was placed, and beckoned to me to sit beside him.

Thou knowest thy father's strict and excellent domestic discipline has trained me to hear the invocation of a blessing before we break the daily bread, for which we are taught to pray—I paused a moment, and, without designing to do so, I suppose my manner made him sensible of what I expected. The two domestics, or inferiors, as I should have before observed, were already seated at the bottom of the table, when my host shot a glance of a very peculiar expression towards the old man, observing, with something approaching to a sneer, "Cristal Nixon, say grace—the gentleman expects one."

"The foul fiend shall be clerk, and say amen, when I turn chaplain," growled out the party addressed, in tones which might have become the

condition of a dying bear; "if the gentleman is a whig, he may please himself with his own mummery. My faith is neither in word nor writ, but in barley bread and brown ale."

"Mabel Moffat," said my guide, looking at the old woman, and raising his sonorous voice, probably because she was hard of hearing, "can'st thou ask a blessing upon our victuals?"

The old woman shook her head, kissed the cross which hung from her rosary, and was silent.

"Mabel will say grace for no heretic," said the master of the house, with the same latent sneer on his brow and in his accent.

At the same moment, the side-door already mentioned opened, and the young woman (so she proved) whom I had first seen at the door of the cottage advanced a little way into the room, then stopped bashfully, as if she had observed that I was looking at her, and asked the master of the house, "if he had called?"

"Not louder than to make old Mabel hear me," he replied; "and yet," he added, as she

turned to retire, "it is a shame a stranger should see a house, where not one of the family can or will say a grace—do thou be our chaplain."

The girl, who was really pretty, came forward with timid modesty, and, apparently unconscious that she was doing anything uncommon, pronounced the benediction, in a silver-toned voice, and with affecting simplicity—her cheek colouring just so much as to shew, that, on a less solemn occasion, she would have felt more embarrassed.

Now, if thou expectest a fine description of this young woman, Alan Fairford, in order to entitle thee to taunt me with having found a Dulcinea in the inhabitant of a fisherman's cottage on the Solway Frith, thou shalt be disappointed; for, having said she seemed very pretty, and that she was a sweet and flexible creature, I have said all concerning her that I can tell thee. She vanished when the benediction was spoken.

My host, with a muttered remark on the cold of our ride, and the keen air of the Solway Sands, to which he did not seem to wish an answer, loaded my plate from Mabel's grillade, which, with a large wooden bowl of potatoes, formed our

whole meal. A sprinkling from the lemon gave a much higher zest than the usual condiment of vinegar; and I promise you that, whatever I might hitherto have felt, either of curiosity or suspicion, did not prevent me from making a most excellent meal, during which little passed betwixt me and my entertainer, unless that he did the usual honours of the table with courtesy indeed, but without even the affectation of hearty hospitality, which those in his (apparent) condition generally affect on such occasions, even when they do not actually feel it. On the contrary, his manner seemed that of a polished landlord towards an unexpected and unwelcome guest, whom, for the sake of his own credit, he receives with civility, but without either good will or cheerfulness.

If you ask how I learned all this, I cannot tell you; nor, were I to write down at length the insignificant intercourse which took place between us, would it perhaps serve to justify these observations. It is sufficient to say, that, in helping his dogs, which he did from time to time with great liberality, he seemed to discharge a duty much more pleasing to himself, than when he paid

the same attention to his guest. Upon the whole, the result on my mind was as I tell it you.

When supper was over, a small case-bottle of brandy, in a curious frame of silver fillagree; circulated to the guests. I had already taken a small glass of the liquor, and, when it had passed to Mabel and to Cristal, and was again returned to the upper end of the table, I could not help taking the bottle in my hand, to look more at the armorial bearings, which were chased with considerable taste on the silver frame-work. Encountering the eye of my entertainer, I instantly saw that my curiosity was highly distasteful; he frowned, bit his lip, and shewed such uncontrollable signs of impatience, that, setting the bottle immediately down, I attempted some apology. To this he did not deign either to reply, or even to listen; and Cristal, at a signal from his master, removed the object of my curiosity, as well as the cup upon which the same arms were engraved.

There ensued an awkward pause, which I endeavoured to break by observing, that "I feared my intrusion upon his hospitality had put his family to some inconvenience."

" I hope you see no appearance of it, sir," he replied, with cold civility. " What inconvenience a family so retired as ours may suffer from receiving an unexpected guest, is like to be trifling, in comparison of what the visitor himself sustains from want of his accustomed comforts. So far, therefore, as our connection extends, our accounts stand clear."

Notwithstanding this discouraging reply, I blundered on, as is usual in such cases, wishing to appear civil, and being, perhaps, in reality the very reverse. " I was afraid," I said, " that my presence had banished one of the family (looking at the side-door) from his table."

" If," he coldly replied, " I meant the young woman whom I had seen in the apartment, I might observe that there was room enough at the table for her to have seated herself, and meat enough, such as it was, for her supper. I might therefore be assured, if she had chosen it, she would have supped with us."

There was no dwelling on this or any other topic longer; for my entertainer, taking up the lamp, observed, that " my wet clothes might re-

concile me for the night to their custom of keeping early hours; that he was under the necessity of going abroad by peep of day to-morrow morning, and would call me up at the same time, to point out the way by which I was to return to the Shepherd's Bush."

This left no opening for farther explanation; nor was there room for it on the usual terms of civility; for, as he neither asked my name, nor expressed the least interest concerning my condition, I—the obliged person—had no pretence to trouble him with such inquiries on my part.

He took up the lamp, and led me through the side-door into a very small room, where a bed had been hastily arranged for my accommodation, and, putting down the lamp, directed me to leave my wet clothes on the outside of the door, that they might be exposed to the fire during the night. He then left me, having muttered something which was meant to pass for good night.

I obeyed his directions with respect to my clothes, the rather that in despite of the spirits which I had drank, I felt my teeth begin to chatter, and received various hints from an aguish

feeling, that a town-bred youth, like myself, could not at once rush into all the hardihood of country sports with impunity. But my bed, though coarse and hard, was dry and clean; and I soon was so little occupied with my heats and tremors, as to listen with interest to a heavy foot, which seemed to be that of my landlord, traversing the boards (there was no ceiling, as you may believe) which roofed my apartment. Light, glancing through these rude planks, became visible as soon as my lamp was extinguished; and as the noise of the slow, solemn, and regular step continued, and I could distinguish that the person turned and returned as he reached the end of the apartment, it seemed clear to me that the walker was engaged in no domestic occupation, but merely pacing to and fro for his own pleasure. An odd amusement this, I thought, for one who had been engaged at least a part of the preceding day in violent exercise, and who talked of rising by the peep of dawn on the ensuing morning.

Meantime I heard the storm, which had been brewing during the evening, begin to descend with a vengeance; sounds, as of distant thunder,

(the noise of the more distant waves, doubtless, on the shore,) mingled with the roaring of the neighbouring torrent, and with the crashing, groaning, and even screaming of the trees in the glen, whose boughs were tormented by the gale. Within the house, windows clattered, and doors clapped, and the walls, though sufficiently substantial for a building of the kind, seemed to me to totter in the tempest.

But still the heavy steps perambulating the apartment over my head, were distinctly heard amid the roar and fury of the elements. I thought more than once I even heard a groan; but I frankly own, that, placed in this unusual situation, my fancy may have misled me. I was tempted several times to call aloud, and ask whether the turmoil around us did not threaten danger to the building which we inhabited; but when I thought of the secluded and unsocial master of the dwelling, who seemed to avoid human society, and to remain unperturbed amid the elemental war, it seemed, that to speak to him at that moment, was to address the spirit of the tempest

himself, since no other being, I thought, could have remained calm and tranquil while winds and waters were thus raging around.

In process of time, fatigue prevailed over anxiety and curiosity. The storm abated, or my senses became deadened to its terrors, and I fell asleep ere yet the mysterious paces of my host had ceased to shake the flooring over my head.

It might have been expected that the novelty of my situation, although it did not prevent my slumbers, should have at least diminished their profoundness, and shortened their duration. It proved otherwise, however; for I never slept more soundly in my life, and only awoke when, at morning dawn, my landlord shook me by the shoulder, and dispelled some dream, of which, fortunately for you, I have no recollection, otherwise you would have been favoured with it, in hopes you might have proved a second Daniel upon the occasion.

"You sleep sound—" said his full deep voice; "ere five years have rolled over your head, your slumbers will be lighter—unless ere then you are wrapped in the sleep which is never broken."

"How!" said I, starting up in the bed; "do you know anything of me—of my prospects—of my views in life?"

"Nothing," he answered, with a grim smile; "but you are entering upon the world young, inexperienced, and full of hopes, and I do but prophecy to you what I would to any one in your condition.—But come; there lie your clothes —a brown crust and a draught of milk wait you if you choose to break your fast; but you must make haste."

"I must first," I said, "take the freedom to spend a few minutes alone, before beginning the ordinary works of the day."

"Oh!—umph!—I cry your devotions pardon," he replied, and left the apartment.

Alan, there is something terrible about this man.

I joined him, as I had promised, in the kitchen where we had supped over night, where I found the articles which he had offered me for breakfast, without either butter or any other addition.

He walked up and down while I partook of the bread and milk; and the slow measured weighty

step seemed identified with those which I had heard last night. His pace, from its funereal slowness, seemed to keep time with some current of internal passion, dark, slow, and unchanged. —We run and leap by the side of a lively and bubbling brook, thought I, internally, as if we would run a race with it; but beside waters deep, slow, and lonely, our pace is sullen and silent as their course. What thoughts may be now corresponding with that furrowed brow, and bear time with that heavy step?

"If you are finished," said he, looking up to me with a glance of impatience, as he observed that I ate no longer, but remained with my eyes fixed upon him, "I wait to shew you the way."

We went out together, no individual of the family having been visible excepting my landlord. I was disappointed of the opportunity which I watched for of giving some gratuity to the domestics, as they seemed to be. As for offering any recompence to the Master of the Household, it seemed to me impossible to have attempted it.

What would I have given for a share of thy composure, who wouldst have thrust half a crown

into a man's hand whose necessities seemed to crave it, conscious that you did right in making the proffer, and not caring sixpence whether you hurt the feelings of him whom you meant to serve. I saw thee once give a penny to a man with a long beard, who, from the dignity of his exterior, might have represented Solon. I had not thy courage, and therefore I made no tender to my mysterious host, although, notwithstanding his display of silver utensils, all around the house bespoke narrow circumstances, if not actual poverty.

We left the place together. But I hear thee murmur thy very new and appropriate ejaculation, *Ohe, jam satis !*—The rest for another time. Perhap I may delay farther communication till I learn how my favours are valued.

LETTER IV.

ALAN FAIRFORD TO DARSIE LATIMER.

I HAVE thy two last epistles, my dear Darsie, and, expecting the third, have been in no hurry to answer them. Do not think my silence ought to be ascribed to my failing to take interest in them, for, truly, they excel (though the task was difficult) thy usual excellings. Since the first moon-calf who earliest discovered the Pandemonium of Milton in an expiring wood-fire—since the first ingenious urchin who blew bubbles out of soap and water, thou, my best of friends, hast the highest knack at making histories out of nothing. Wert thou to plant the bean in the nursery-tale, thou wouldst make out, so soon as it began to germinate, that the castle of the giant was about to elevate its battlements on the top of it. All that

happens to thee gets a touch of the wonderful and the sublime from thy own rich imagination. Didst ever see what artists call a Claude Lorraine glass, which spreads its own particular hue over the whole landscape which you see through it?—thou beholdest ordinary events just through such a medium.

I have looked carefully at the facts of thy last long letter, and they are just such as might have befallen any little truant of the High School, who had got down to Leith Sands, gone beyond the *prawn-dub*, wet his hose and shoon, and, finally, had been carried home, in compassion, by some high-kilted fish-wife, cursing all the while the trouble which the brat occasioned her.

I admire the figure which thou must have made, clinging for dear life behind the old fellow's back—thy jaws chattering with fear, thy muscles cramped with anxiety. Thy execrable supper of broiled salmon, which was enough to ensure the night-mare's regular visits for a twelvemonth, may be termed a real affliction; but as for the storm of Thursday last, (such, I observe, was the date,) it roared, whistled, howled, and bellowed, as fearful-

ly amongst the old chimney-heads in the Candlemaker-row, as it could on the Solway shore, for the very wind of it—*teste me per totam noctem vigilante.* And then in the morning again, when,—Lord help you in your sentimental delicacy!—you bid the poor man adieu, without even tendering him half-a-crown for supper and lodging!

You laugh at me for giving a penny (to be accurate, though, thou shouldst have said sixpence,) to an old fellow, whom thou, in thy high flight, wouldst have sent home supperless, because he was like Solon or Belisarius. But you forget that the affront descended like a benediction into the pouch of the old gaberlunzie, who overflowed in blessings upon the generous donor—Long ere he would have thanked thee, Darsie, for thy barren veneration of his beard and his bearing. Then you laugh at my good father's retreat from Falkirk, just as if it were not time for a man to trudge when three or four mountain knaves, with naked claymores, and heels as light as their fingers, were scampering after him, crying *furinish.* You remember what he said himself when the Laird of Bucklivat

told him that *furinish* signified "stay a while." "What the devil," he said, surprised out of his Presbyterian correctness by the unreasonableness of such a request under the circumstances, "would the scoundrels have had me stop to have my head cut off?"

Imagine such a train at your own heels, Darsie, and ask yourself whether you would not exert your legs as fast as you did in flying from the Solway tide. And yet you impeach my father's courage. I tell you he has courage enough to do what is right, and to spurn what is wrong—courage enough to defend a righteous cause with hand and purse, and to take the part of the poor man against his oppressor, without fear of the consequences to himself. This is civil courage, Darsie; and it is of little consequence to most men in this age and country, whether they ever possess military courage or no.

Do not think I am angry at you, though I thus attempt to rectify your opinions on my father's account. I am well aware that, upon the whole, he is scarce regarded with more respect by me than by thee. And, while I am in a serious hu-

mour, which it is difficult to preserve with one who is perpetually tempting me to laugh at him, pray, dearest Darsie, let not thy ardour for adventure carry thee into more such scrapes as that of the Solway Sands. The rest of the story is a mere imagination; but that stormy evening might have proved, as the clown says to Lear, "a naughty night to swim in."

As for the rest, if you can work mysterious and romantic heroes out of old cross-grained fishermen, why I for one will reap some amusement by the metamorphosis. Yet hold! even there, there is some need of caution. This same female chaplain—thou sayest so little of her, and so much of every one else, that it excites some doubt in my mind. *Very pretty* she is, it seems —and that is all thy discretion informs me of. There are cases in which silence implies other things than consent. Wert thou ashamed or afraid, Darsie, to trust thyself with the praises of the very pretty grace-sayer?—As I live, thou blushest! Why, do I not know thee an inveterate Squire of Dames? and have I not been in thy confidence? An elegant elbow, displayed when the

rest of the figure was muffled in a cardinal, or a neat well-turned ankle and instep, seen by chance as its owner tripped up the Old Assembly Close, turn thy brain for eight days. Thou wert once caught, if I remember rightly, with a single glance of a single matchless eye, which, when the fair owner withdrew her veil, proved to be single in the literal sense of the word. And, besides, were you not another time enamoured of a voice—a mere voice, that mingled in the psalmody at the Old Grey Friars' Church—until you discovered the proprietor of that dulcet organ to be Miss Dolly MacIzzard, who is both "back and breast," as our saying goes?

All these things considered, and contrasted with thy artful silence on the subject of this grace-saying Nereid of thine, I must beg thee to be more explicit upon that subject in thy next, unless thou wouldst have me form the conclusion that thou thinkest more of her than thou carest to talk of.

You will not expect much news from this quarter, as you know the monotony of my life, and are aware it must at present be devoted to

uninterrupted study. You have said a thousand times, that I am only qualified to make my way by dint of plodding, and therefore plod I must.

My father seems to be more impatient of your absence than he was after your first departure. He is sensible, I believe, that our solitary meals want the light which your gay humour was wont to throw over them, and feels melancholy, as men do when the light of the sun is no longer upon the landscape. If it is thus with him, thou mayest imagine it is much more so with me, and canst conceive how heartily I wish that thy frolic were ended, and thou once more our inmate.

I resume my pen, after a few hours interval, to say that an incident has occurred, on which you will yourself be building a hundred castles in the air, and which even I, jealous as I am of such baseless fabrics, cannot but own affords ground for singular conjecture.

My father has of late taken me frequently

along with him when he attends the Courts, in his anxiety to see me properly initiated into the practical forms of business. I own I feel something on his account and my own from this over-anxiety, which, I dare say, renders us both ridiculous. But what signifies my repugnance? my father drags me up to his counsel learned in the law,—"Are you quite ready to come on to-day, Mr Crossbite?—This is my son, designed for the bar—I take the liberty to bring him with me to-day to the consultation, merely that he may see how these things are managed."

Mr Crossbite smiles and bows, as a lawyer smiles on the solicitor who employs him, and, I dare say, thrusts his tongue into his cheek, and whispers into the first great wig that passes him, "What the d—l does old Fairford mean by letting loose his whelp on me?"

As I stood beside them, too much vexed at the childish part I was made to play to derive much information from the valuable arguments of Mr Crossbite, I observed a rather elderly man, who stood with his eyes firmly bent on my father, as

if he only waited an end of the business in which he was engaged, to address him. There was something, I thought, in the gentleman's appearance which commanded attention—Yet his dress was not in the present taste, and though it had once been magnificent, was now antiquated and unfashionable. His coat was of branched velvet, with a satin lining, a waistcoat of violet-coloured silk, much embroidered; his breeches the same stuff as the coat. He wore square-toed shoes, with fore-tops, as they are called; and his silk stockings were rolled up over his knee, as you may have seen in pictures, and here and there on some of those originals who seem to pique themselves on dressing after the mode of Methuselah. A *chapeau bras* and sword necessarily completed his equipment, which, though out of date, shewed that it belonged to a man of distinction.

The instant Mr Crossbite had ended what he had to say, this gentleman walked up to my father, with "Your servant, Mr Fairford—it is long since you and I met."

My father, whose politeness, you know, is ex-

act and formal, bowed, and hemmed, and was confused, and at length professed that the distance since they had met was so great, that though he remembered the face perfectly, the name, he was sorry to say, had—really—somehow—escaped his memory.

"Have you forgot Herries of Birvenswork?" said the gentleman, and my father bowed even more profoundly than before; though I think his reception of his old friend seemed to lose some of the respectful civility which he bestowed on him while his name was yet unknown. It now seemed to be something like the lip-courtesy which the heart would have denied had ceremony permitted.

My father, however, again bowed low, and hoped he saw him well.

"So well, my good Mr Fairford, that I come hither determined to renew my acquaintance with one or two old friends, and with you in the first place.—I halt at my old resting-place—you must dine with me to-day at Paterson's, at the head of the Horse Wynd—it is near your new fashionable dwelling, and I have business with you."

My father excused himself respectfully, and not without embarrassment—"he was particularly engaged at home."

"Then I will dine with you, man," said Mr Herries of Birvenswork; "the few minutes you can spare me after dinner will suffice for my business; and I will not prevent you a moment from minding your own—I am no bottle-man."

You have often remarked that my father, though a scrupulous observer of the rites of hospitality, seems to exercise them rather as a duty than as a pleasure; indeed but for a conscientious wish to feed the hungry and receive the stranger, his doors would open to strangers much seldomer than is the case. I never saw so strong an example of this peculiarity, (which I should otherwise have said is caricatured in your description,) as in his mode of homologating the self-given invitation of Mr Herries. The embarrassed brow, and the attempt at a smile which accompanied his "We will expect the honour of seeing you in Brown's Square at three o'clock," could not deceive any one, and did not impose upon the old Laird. It was with a look of scorn that

he replied, "I will relieve you then till that hour, Mr Fairford;" and his whole manner seemed to say, "It is my pleasure to dine with you, and I care not whether I am welcome or no."

When he turned away, I asked my father who he was.

"An unfortunate gentleman," was the reply.

"He looks pretty well on his misfortunes," replied I. "I should not have suspected that so gay an outside was lacking a dinner."

"Who told you that he does?" replied my father; "he is *omni suspicione major*, so far as worldly circumstances are concerned—It is to be hoped he makes a good use of them;—though if he does, it will be for the first time in his life."

"He has then been an irregular liver?" insinuated I.

My father replied by that famous brocard with which he silences all unacceptable queries, turning in the slightest degree upon the failings of our neighbours,—"If we mend our own faults, Alan, we shall all of us have enough to do, without sitting in judgment upon other folks."

Here I was again at fault; but rallying once more, I observed, he had the air of a man of high rank and family

"He is well entitled," said my father, "representing Herries of Birrenswork; a branch of that great and once powerful family of Herries, the elder branch whereof merged in the house of Nithesdale at the death of Lord Robin the Philosopher, Anno Domini sixteen hundred and sixty-seven."

"Has he still," said I, "his patrimonial estate of Birrenswork?"

"No," replied my father; "so far back as his father's time, it was a mere designation—the property being forfeited by Herbert Herries following his kinsman, the Earl of Derwentwater, to the Preston affair in 1715. But they keep up the designation, thinking, doubtless, that their claims may be revived in more favourable times for Jacobites and for Popery; and folks who in no way partake of their fantastic capriccios, do yet allow it to pass unchallenged, *ex comitate*, if not not *misericordia*.—But were he the Pope and the the old Pr both, we must get some dinner ready

for him, since he has thought fit to offer himself. So hasten home, my lad, and tell Hannah, Cook Epps, and James Wilkinson, to do their best; and let thou look out a pint or two of M[illegible] best—it is in the fifth binn—there are the keys of the wine cellar.—Do not leave them in the lock—you know poor James's failing, though he is an honest creature under all other temptations—and I have but two bottles of the old brandy [illegible]—we must keep it for [illegible], Alan."

Away went I[illegible]ations—the hour of dinner came, [illegible] did Mr H[illegible] [illegible]reuswork.

If I had thy power of imagination and description, Darsie, I could make out a fine, dark, mysterious, Rembrandt-looking portrait of this same stranger, which should be as far superior to thy fisherman, as a coat of chain-mail is to a herring-net. I can assure you there is some matter for description about him; but knowing my own imperfections, I can only say, I thought him eminently disagreeable and ill-bred.—No, *ill-bred* is not the proper word; on the contrary, he appeared to know the rules of good-breeding per-

fectly, and only to think that the rank of the company did not require that he should attend to them—a view of the matter infinitely more offensive than if his behaviour had been that of uneducated and proper rudeness. While my father said grace, the Laird did all but whistle aloud; and when I, at my father's desire, returned thanks, he used his tooth-pick, as if he had waited that moment for its exercise.

So much for Kirk—with King, matters went even worse. My father, thou knowest, is particularly full of deference to his guests; and in the present case, he seemed more than usually desirous to escape every cause of dispute. He so far compromised his loyalty, as to announce merely "The King," as his first toast after dinner, instead of the emphatic "King George," which is his usual formula. Our guest made a motion with his glass, so as to pass it over the water-decanter which stood beside him, and added, "Over the water."

[illegible] father coloured, but would not seem to not[illegible]is. Much more there was of careless and the old [illegible]ful, both in his manner and tone of con-

versation; so that though I know my father's prejudices in favour of rank and birth, and though I am aware his otherwise masculine understanding has never entirely shaken off the slavish awe of the great, which in his earlier days they had so many modes of commanding, still I could hardly excuse him for enduring so much insolence—such it seemed to be—as this self-invited guest was disposed to offer to him at his own table.

One can endure a traveller in the same carriage, if he treads upon your toes by accident, or even through negligence; but it is very different when, knowing that they are rather of a tender description, he continues to pound away at them with his hoofs. In my poor opinion—and I am a man of peace—you can, in that case, hardly avoid a declaration of war.

I believe my father read my thoughts in my eye; for, pulling out his watch, he said, "Half past four, Alan—you should be in your own room by this time—Birrenswork will excuse you."

Our visitor nodded carelessly, and I had no

longer any pretence to remain. But as I left the room, I heard this Magnate of Nithesdale distinctly mention the name of Latimer. I lingered; but at length a direct hint from my father obliged me to withdraw; and when, an hour afterwards, I was summoned to partake of a cup of tea, our guest had departed. He had business that evening in the High Street, and could not spare time even to drink tea. I could not help saying, I considered his departure as a relief from incivility. "What business has he to upbraid us," I said, "with the change of our dwelling from a more inconvenient to a better quarter of the town? What was it to him if we chose to imitate some of the conveniences or luxuries of an English dwelling-house, instead of living piled up above each other in flats? Have his patrician birth and aristocratic fortunes given him any right to censure those who dispose of the fruits of their own industry, according to their own pleasure?"

My father took a long pinch of snuff, and replied, "Very well, Alan; very well, indeed. I wish Mr Crossbite or Counsellor Pest had heard

you; they must have acknowledged that ye have a talent for forensic elocution; and it may not be amiss to try it at home now and then, to gather audacity and keep yourself in breath. But touching the subject of this paraffle of words, it's not worth a pinch of tobacco. D'ye think that I care for Mr Herries of Birrenswork more than any other gentleman who comes here about business, although I do not care to go tilting at his throat, because he speaks like a gray goose, as he is? But to say no more about him, I want to have Darsie Latimer's present direction; for it is possible I may have to write the lad a line with my own hand—and yet I do not well know—but give me the direction at all events."

I did so, and if you have heard from my father accordingly, you know more, probably, about the subject of this letter than I who write it. But if you have not, then shall I have discharged a friend's duty, in letting you know that there certainly is something afloat between this disagreeable Laird and my father, in which you are considerably interested.

Adieu! and although I have given thee a

subject for waking dreams, beware of building a castle too heavy for the foundation; which, in the present instance, is barely the word Latimer occurring in a conversation betwixt a gentleman of Dumfries-shire and a W.S. of Edinburgh—*Cætera prorsus ignoro.*

LETTER VI.

DARSIE LATIMER TO ALAN FAIRFORD.

[In continuation of Letters III. and IV.]

I TOLD thee I walked out into the open air with my grave and stern landlord. I could now see more perfectly than on the preceding night the secluded glen, in which stood the two or three cottages which seemed the abode of him and his family.

It was so narrow, in proportion to its depth, that no ray of the morning sun was like to reach it till it should rise high in the horizon. Looking up the dell, you saw a brawling brook issuing in foamy haste from a covert of underwood, like a race-horse impatient to arrive at the goal; and, if you gazed yet more earnestly, you

might observe part of a high water-fall glimmering through the foliage, and giving occasion, doubtless, to the precipitate speed of the brook. Lower down, the stream became more placid, and opened into a quiet piece of water, which afforded a rude haven to two or three fishermen's boats, then lying high and dry on the sand, the tide being out. Two or three miserable huts could be seen beside this little haven, inhabited probably by the owners of the boats, but inferior in every respect to the establishment of mine host, though that was miserable enough.

I had but a minute or two to make these observations, yet during that space my companion shewed symptoms of impatience, and more than once shouted, "Christal—Christal Nixon," until the old man of the preceding evening appeared at the door of one of the neighbouring cottages or out-houses, leading the strong black horse which I before commemorated, ready bridled and saddled. My conductor made Christal a sign with his finger, and, turning from the cottage door, led the way up the steep path or ravine which

connected the sequestered dell with the open country.

Had I been perfectly aware of the character of the road down which I had been hurried with so much impetuosity on the preceding evening, I greatly question if I should have ventured the descent; for it deserved no better name than the channel of a torrent, now in a good measure filled with water, that dashed in foam and fury into the dell, being swelled with the rains of the preceding night. I ascended this ugly path with some difficulty, although on foot, and felt dizzy when I observed, from such traces as the rains had not obliterated, that the horse seemed almost to have slid down it upon his haunches the evening before.

My host threw himself on his horse's back, without placing a foot in the stirrup—passed me in the perilous ascent, against which he pressed his steed as if the animal had had the footing of a wild cat. The water and mud splashed from his heels in his reckless course, and a few bounds placed him on the top of the bank, where I presently joined him, and found the horse and rider

standing still as a statue; the former panting and expanding his broad nostrils to the morning wind, the latter motionless, with his eye fixed on the first beams of the rising sun, which already began to peer above the eastern horizon, and gild the distant mountains of Cumberland and Liddesdale.

He seemed in a reverie, from which he started at my approach, and, putting his horse in motion, led the way through a broken and sandy road, which traversed a waste, level, and uncultivated tract of downs, intermixed with morass, much like that in the neighbourhood of my quarters at Shepherd's Bush. Indeed the whole open ground of this district, where it approaches the sea, has, except in a few favoured spots, the same uniform and dreary character.

Advancing about a hundred yards from the brink of the glen, we gained a still more extensive command of this desolate prospect, which seemed even more dreary, as contrasted with the opposite shores of Cumberland, crossed and intersected by ten thousand lines of trees growing in hedge-rows, shaded with groves and woods of

considerable extent, animated by hamlets and villas, from which thin clouds of smoke already gave sign of human life and human industry.

My conductor had extended his arm, and was pointing the road to Shepherd's Bush, when the step of a horse was heard approaching us. He looked sharply around, and having observed who was approaching, proceeded in his instructions to me, planting himself at the same time in the very middle of the path, which, at the place where we halted, had a slough on the one side, and a sand-bank on the other.

I observed that the rider who approached us slackened his horse's pace from a slow trot to a walk, as if desirous to suffer us to proceed, or at least to avoid passing us at a spot where the difficulty of doing so must have brought us very close to each other. You know my old failing, Alan, and that I am always willing to attend to anything in preference to the individual who has for the time possession of the conversation.

Agreeably to this amiable propensity, I was internally speculating concerning the cause of the rider keeping aloof from us, when my companion,

elevating his deep voice so suddenly and so sternly, as at once to recal my wandering thoughts, exclaimed, "In the name of the devil, young man, do you think that others have no better use for their time than you have, that you oblige me to repeat the same thing to you three times over?—Do you see, I say, yonder thing at a mile's distance, that looks like a finger-post, or rather like a gallows?—I would it had a dreaming fool hanging upon it, as an example to all meditative mooncalves!—Yon gibbet-looking pole will guide you to the bridge, where you must pass the large brook; then proceed straight forwards, till several roads divide at a cairn.—Plague on thee, thou art wandering again!"

It is indeed quite true, that at this moment the horseman approached us, and my attention was again called to him as I made way to let him pass. His whole exterior at once shewed that he belonged to the Society of Friends, or, as the world and the world's law calls them, Quakers. A strong and useful iron-grey galloway shewed, by its sleek and good condition, that the merciful man was merciful to his beast.

His accoutrements were in the usual unostentatious, but clean and serviceable order, which characterizes these sectaries. His long surtout of dark-grey superfine cloth descended down to the middle of his leg, and was buttoned up to his chin, to defend himself against the morning air. As usual, his ample beaver hung down without button or loop, and shaded a comely and placid countenance, the gravity of which appeared to contain some seasoning of humour, and had nothing in common with the pinched puritanical air affected by devotees in general. The brow was open and free from wrinkles, whether of age or hypocrisy. The eye was clear, calm, and considerate, yet appeared to be disturbed by apprehension, not to say fear, as, pronouncing the usual salutation of, "I wish thee a good morrow, friend," he indicated, by turning his palfrey close to one side of the path, a wish to glide past us with as little trouble as possible—just as a traveller would choose to pass a mastiff of whose peaceable intentions he is by no means confident.

But my friend, not meaning, perhaps, that he should get off so easily, put his own horse quite across the path, so that, without plunging into the slough, or scrambling up the bank, the Quaker could not have past him. Neither of these was an experiment without hazard greater than the passenger seemed willing to incur. He halted, therefore, as if waiting till my companion should make way for him; and, as they sat fronting each other, I could not help thinking that they might have formed no bad emblem of Peace and War; for, although my conductor was unarmed, yet the whole of his manner, his stern look, and his upright seat on horseback, were entirely those of a soldier in undress. He accosted the Quaker in these words,—"So ho! friend Joshua—thou art early to the road this morning. Has the spirit moved thee and thy righteous brethren to act with some honesty, and pull down yonder tide-nets that keep the fish from coming up the river?"

"Surely, friend, not so," answered Joshua firmly, but good-humouredly at the same time;

"thou canst not expect that our own hands should pull down what our own purses established. Thou killest the fish with spear, line, and coble-net; and we, with snares and with nets, which work by the ebb and the flow of the tide. Each doth what seems best in his eyes to secure a share of the blessing which Providence hath bestowed on the river, and that within his own bounds. I prithee seek no quarrel against us, for thou shalt have no wrong at our hand."

"Be assured I will take none at the hand of any man, whether his hat be cocked or broad-brimmed," answered the fisherman. "I tell you in fair terms, Joshua Geddes, that you and your partners are using unlawful craft to destroy the fish in the Solway by stake-nets and wears; and that we, who fish fairly, and like men, as our fathers did, have daily and yearly less sport and less profit. Do not think gravity or hypocrisy can carry it off as you have done. The world knows you, and we know you. You will destroy the salmon which make the livelihood of fifty poor families, and then wipe your mouth, and

go to make a speech at Meeting. But do not hope it will last thus. I give you fair warning, we will be upon you one morning soon, when we will not leave a stake standing in the pools of the Solway; and down the tide they shall every one go, and well if we do not send a lessee along with them."

"Friend," replied Joshua, with a constrained smile, "but that I know thou dost not mean as thou say'st, I would tell thee we are under the protection of this country's laws; nor do we the less trust to obtain their protection, that our principles permit us not, by any act of violent resistance, to protect ourselves."

"All villainous cant and cowardice," exclaimed the fisherman, "and assumed merely as a cloak to your hypocritical avarice."

"Nay, say not cowardice, my friend," answered the Quaker, "since thou knowest there may be as much courage in enduring as in acting; and I will be judged by this youth, or by any one else, whether there is not more cowardice—even in the opinion of that world whose thoughts are the breath in thy nostrils—in the armed oppressor,

who doth injury, than in the defenceless and patient sufferer, who endureth it with constancy."

"I will change no more words with you on the subject," said the fisherman, who, as if something moved at the last argument which Mr Geddes had used, now made room for him to pass forward on his journey.—"Do not forget, however," he added, "that you have had fair warning, nor suppose that we will accept of fair words in apology for foul play. These nets of yours are unlawful—they spoil our fishings—and we will have them down at all risks and hazards. I am a man of my word, friend Joshua."

"I trust thou art," said the Quaker; "but thou art the rather bound to be cautious in rashly affirming what thou wilt never execute. For I tell thee, friend, that though there is as great a difference between thee and one of our people, as there is between a lion and a sheep, yet I know and believe thou hast so much of the lion in thee, that thou wouldst scarce employ thy strength and thy rage upon that which professeth no means of resistance. Report says so much good of thee at least, if it says little more."

"Time will try," answered the fisherman; "and hark thee, Joshua, before we part I will put thee in the way of doing one good deed, which, credit me, is better than twenty moral speeches. Here is a stranger youth, whom Heaven has so scantily gifted with brains, that he will bewilder himself in the Sands, as he did last night, unless thou wilt kindly shew him the way to Shepherd's Bush; for I have been in vain endeavouring to make him comprehend the road thither—Hast thou so much charity under thy simplicity, Quaker, as to do this good turn?"

"Nay, it is thou, friend," answered Joshua, "that dost lack charity, to suppose any one unwilling to do so simple a kindness."

"Thou art right—I should have remembered it can cost thee nothing.—Young gentleman, this pious pattern of primitive simplicity will teach thee the right way to the Shepherd's Bush—ay, and will himself shear thee like a sheep, if you come to buying and selling with him."

He then abruptly asked me, how long I intended to remain at Shepherd's Bush.

I replied, I was at present uncertain—as long,

probably, as I could amuse myself in the neighbourhood.

"You are fond of sport?" he added, in the same tone of brief inquiry.

I answered in the affirmative, but added, I was totally inexperienced.

"Perhaps if you reside here for some days," he said, "we may meet again, and I may have the chance of giving you a lesson."

Ere I could express either thanks or assent, he turned short round with a wave of his hand, by way of adieu, and rode back to the verge of the dell from which we had emerged together; and as he remained standing upon the banks, I could long hear his voice while he shouted down to those within its recesses.

Meanwhile the Quaker and I proceeded on our journey for some time in silence; he restraining his sober-minded steed to a pace which might have suited a much less active walker than myself, and looking on me from time to time with an expression of curiosity, mingled with benignity. For my part, I cared not to speak first. It happened I had never before been in company with one of

this particular sect, and, afraid that in addressing him I might unwittingly infringe upon some of their prejudices or peculiarities, I patiently remained silent. At length he asked me, whether I had been long in the service of the Laird, as men called him.

I repeated the words "in his service?" with such an accent of surprise, as induced him to say, "Nay, but, friend, I mean no offence; perhaps I should have said in his society—an inmate, I mean, in his house?"

"I am totally unknown to the person from whom we have just parted," said I, "and our connection is only temporary—He had the charity to give me his guidance from the Sands, and a night's harbourage from the tempest. So our acquaintance began, and there it is likely to end; for you may observe that our friend is by no means apt to encourage familiarity."

"So little so," answered my companion, "that thy case is, I think, the first in which I ever heard of his receiving any one into his house; that is, if thou hast really spent the night there."

"Why should you doubt it?" replied I;

"there is no motive I can have to deceive you, nor is the object worth it."

"Be not angry with me," said the Quaker; "but thou knowest that thine own people do not, as we humbly endeavour to do, confine themselves within the simplicity of truth, but employ the language of falsehood, not only for profit, but for compliment, and sometimes for mere diversion. I have heard various stories of my neighbour; of most of which I only believe a small part, and even then they are difficult to reconcile with each other. But this being the first time I ever heard of his receiving a stranger within his dwelling, made me express some doubts. I pray thee let them not offend thee."

"He does not," said I, "appear to possess in much abundance the means of exercising hospitality, and so may be excused from offering it in ordinary cases."

"That is to say, friend," replied Joshua, "thou hast supped ill, and perhaps breakfasted worse. Now my small tenement, called Mount Sharon, is nearer to us by two miles than thine inn; and although going thither may prolong thy

walk, as taking thee off the straighter road to Shepherd's Bush, yet methinks exercise will suit thy youthful limbs, as well as a good plain meal thy youthful appetite. What say'st thou, my young acquaintance?"

"If it puts you not to inconvenience," I replied; for the invitation was cordially given, and my bread and milk had been hastily swallowed, and in small quantity.

"Nay," said Joshua, "use not the language of compliment with those who renounce it. Had this poor courtesy been very inconvenient, perhaps I had not offered it."

"I accept the invitation, then," said I, "in the same good spirit in which you give it."

The Quaker smiled, reached me his hand, I shook it, and we travelled on in great cordiality with each other. The fact is, I was much entertained by contrasting in my own mind, the open manner of the kind-hearted Joshua Geddes, with the abrupt, dark, and lofty demeanour of my entertainer on the preceding evening. Both were blunt and unceremonious; but the plainness of the Quaker had the character of devo-

tional simplicity, and was mingled with the more real kindness, as if honest Joshua was desirous of atoning, by his sincerity, for the lack of external courtesy. On the contrary, the manners of the fisherman were those of one to whom the rules of good behaviour might be familiar, but who, either from pride or from misanthropy, scorned to observe them. Still I thought of him with interest and curiosity, notwithstanding so much about him that was repulsive; and I promised myself, in the course of my conversation with the Quaker, to learn all that he knew on the subject. He turned the conversation, however, into a different channel, and inquired into my own condition of life, and views in visiting this remote frontier.

I only thought it necessary to mention my name, and add, that I had been educated to the law, but finding myself possessed of some independence, I had of late permitted myself some relaxation, and was residing at Shepherd's Bush to enjoy the pleasure of angling.

" I do thee no harm, young man," said my new friend, " in wishing thee a better employ-

ment for thy grave hours, and a more humane amusement (if amusement thou must have) for those of a lighter character."

"You are severe, sir," I replied. "I heard you but a moment since refer yourself to the protection of the laws of the country—if there be laws, there must be lawyers to explain, and judges to administer them."

Joshua smiled, and pointed to the sheep which were grazing on the downs over which we were travelling.—"Were a wolf," he said, "to come even now upon yonder flocks, they would crowd for protection, doubtless, around the shepherd and his dogs; yet they are bitten and harassed daily by the one, shorn, and finally killed and eaten by the other. But I say not this to shock you; for, though laws and lawyers are evils, yet they are necessary evils in this probationary state of society, till man shall learn to render unto his fellows that which is their due, according to the light of his own conscience, and through no other compulsion. Meanwhile, I have known many righteous men who have followed thy intended profession in honesty and uprightness of walk.

The greater their merit, who walk erect in a path which so many find slippery."

"And angling,"—said I, "you object to that also as an amusement, you who, if I understood rightly what passed between you and my late landlord, are yourself a proprietor of fisheries."

"Not a proprietor," he replied, "I am only, in copartnery with others, a tacksman or lessee of some valuable salmon fisheries a little down the coast. But mistake me not. The evil of angling, with which I class all sports, as they are called, which have the sufferings of animals for their end and object, does not consist in the mere catching and killing those animals with which the bounty of Providence hath stocked the earth for the good of man, but in making their protracted agony a principle of delight and enjoyment. I do indeed cause these fisheries to be conducted for the necessary taking, killing, and selling the fish; and, in the same way, were I a farmer, I should send my lambs to market. But I should as soon think of contriving myself a sport and amusement out of the trade of the butcher as out of that of the fisher."

We argued this point no farther; for though I thought his arguments a little too high-strained, yet as my mind acquitted me from having taken delight in aught but the theory of field-sports, I did not think myself called upon stubbornly to advocate a practice which had afforded me so little pleasure.

We were by this time arrived at the remains of an old finger-post, which my host had formerly pointed out as a land-mark. Here, a ruinous wooden bridge, supported by long posts resembling crutches, served me to get across the water, while my new friend sought a ford a good way higher up, for the stream was considerably swelled.

As I paused for his rejoining me, I observed an angler at a little distance pouching trout after trout, as fast almost as he could cast his line; and I own, in spite of Joshua's lecture on humanity, I could not but envy his adroitness and success, —so natural is the love of sport to our minds, or so easily are we taught to assimilate success in field-sports with ideas of pleasure, and with the praise due to address and agility. I soon recognized in the successful angler little Benjie, who had

been my guide and tutor in that gentle art, as you have learned from my former letters. I called—I whistled—the rascal recognized me, and, starting like a guilty thing, seemed hesitating whether to approach or to run away; and when he determined on the former, it was to assail me with a loud, clamorous, and exaggerated report of the anxiety of all at the Shepherd's Bush for my personal safety. How my landlady had wept, how Sam and the ostler had not the heart to go to bed, but sat up all night drinking—and how he himself had been up long before day-break to go in quest of me.

"And you were switching the water, I suppose," said I, "to discover my dead body?"

This observation produced a long "Na—a—a" of acknowledged detection; but, with his natural impudence, and confidence in my good-nature, he immediately added, "that he thought I would like a fresh trout or twa for breakfast, and the water being in such rare trim for the saumon raun, he couldna help taking a cast."

While we were engaged in this discussion, the

honest Quaker returned to the farther end of the wooden bridge to tell me he could not venture to cross the brook in its present state, but would be under the necessity to ride round by the stone bridge, which was a mile and a half higher up than his own house. He was about to give me directions how to proceed without him, and inquire for his sister, when I suggested to him, that if he pleased to trust his horse to little Benjie, the boy might carry him round by the bridge, while we walked the shorter and more pleasant road.

Joshua shook his head, for he was well acquainted with Benjie, who, he said, was the naughtiest varlet in the whole neighbourhood. Nevertheless, rather than part company, he agreed to put his pony under his charge for a short season, with many injunctions that he should not attempt to mount, but lead the pony (even Solomon) by the bridle, under the assurances of sixpence in case of proper demeanour, and penalty that if he transgressed the orders given him, "verily he should be scourged."

Promises cost Benjie nothing, and he shower-

ed them out wholesale; till the Quaker at length yielded up the bridle to him, repeating his charges, and enforcing them by holding up his forefinger. On my part, I called to Benjie to leave the fish he had taken at Mount Sharon, making, at the same time, an apologetic countenance to my new friend, not being quite aware whether the compliment would be agreeable to such a condemner of field-sports.

He understood me at once, and reminded me of the practical distinction betwixt catching the animals as an object of cruel and wanton sport, and eating them as lawful and gratifying articles of food after they were killed. On the latter point he had no scruples; but, on the contrary, assured me, that this brook contained the real red trout, so highly esteemed by all connoisseurs, and that, when eaten within an hour of their being caught, they had a peculiar firmness of substance and delicacy of flavour, which rendered them an agreeable addition to a morning meal, especially when earned, like ours, by early rising, and an hour or two's wholesome exercise.

But to thy alarm be it spoken, Alan, we did

not come so far as the frying of our fish without farther adventure. So it is only to spare thy patience, and mine own eyes, that I pull up for the present, and send thee the rest of my story in a subsequent letter.

LETTER VII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

[In continuation.]

LITTLE Benjie, with the pony, having been sent off on the left side of the brook, the Quaker and I sauntered on, like the cavalry and infantry of the same army occupying the opposite banks of a river, and observing the same line of march. But, while my worthy companion was assuring me of a pleasant greensward walk to his mansion, little Benjie, who had been charged to keep in sight, chose to deviate from the path assigned him, and, turning to the right, led his charge, Solomon, out of our vision.

"The villain means to mount him!" cried

Joshua, with more vivacity than was consistent with his profession of passive endurance.

I endeavoured to appease his apprehensions, as he pushed on, wiping his brow with vexation, assuring him, that if the boy did mount, he would, for his own sake, ride gently.

"You do not know him," said Joshua, rejecting all consolation; "*he* do anything gently!—no, he will gallop Solomon—he will misuse the sober patience of the poor animal who has borne me so long! Yes, I was given over to my own devices when I would ever let him touch the bridle, for such a little miscreant there never was before him in this country."

He then proceeded to expatiate on every sort of rustic enormity of which he accused Benjie. He had been suspected of snaring partridges—was detected by Joshua himself in liming singing-birds—stood fully charged with having worried several cats, by aid of a lurcher which attended him, and which was as lean, and ragged, and mischievous, as his master. Finally, Benjie stood accused of having stolen a duck, to hunt it with the said lurcher, which was dexterous on wa-

ter as on land. I chimed in with my friend, in order to avoid giving him farther irritation, and declared, I should be disposed, from my own experience, to give up Benjie as one of Satan's imps. Joshua Geddes began to censure the phrase as too much exaggerated, and otherwise unbecoming the mouth of a reflecting person; and, just as I was apologizing for it, as being a term of common parlance, we heard certain sounds on the opposite side of the brook, which seemed to indicate that Solomon and Benjie were at issue together. The sand-hills behind which Benjie seemed to take his course, had concealed from us, as doubtless he meant it should be, his ascent into the forbidden saddle, and, putting Solomon to his mettle, which he was seldom called upon to exert, they had cantered away together in great amity, till they came near to the ford from which the palfrey's legitimate owner had already turned back.

Here a contest of opinions took place between the horse and his rider. The latter, according to his instructions, attempted to direct Solomon towards the distant bridge of stone; but Solomon

opined that the ford was the shortest way to his own stable. The point was sharply contested, and we heard Benjie gee-hupping, tchek-tcheking, and, above all, flogging in great style; while Solomon, who, docile in his general habits, was now stirred beyond his patience, made a great trampling and recalcitration; and it was their joint noise which we heard, without being able to see, though Joshua might too well guess, the cause of it.

Alarmed at these indications, the Quaker began to shout out, "Benjie—thou varlet!—Solomon—thou fool!" when the couple presented themselves in full drive, Solomon having now decidedly obtained the better of the conflict, and bringing his unwilling rider upon high career down to the ford. Never was there anger changed so fast into humane fear, as that of my good companion. "The varlet will be drowned!" he exclaimed—"a widow's son!—her only son!—and drowned!—let me go——" And he struggled with me stoutly as I hung upon him, to prevent him from plunging into the ford.

I had no fear whatever for Benjie; for the

blackguard vermin, though he could not manage the refractory horse, stuck on his seat like a monkey. Solomon and Benjie scrambled through the ford with little inconvenience, and resumed their gallop on the other side.

It was impossible to guess whether on this last occasion Benjie was running off with Solomon, or Solomon with Benjie; but, judging from character and motives, I rather suspected the former. I could not help laughing as the rascal passed me, grinning betwixt terror and delight, perched on the very pommel of the saddle, and holding with extended arms by bridle and mane; while Solomon, the bit secured between his teeth, and his head bored down betwixt his fore-legs, past his master in this unwonted guise as hard as he could pelt.

"The mischievous bastard!" exclaimed the Quaker, terrified out of his usual moderation of speech—"the doomed gallows-bird!—he will break Solomon's wind to a certainty."

I prayed him to be comforted—assured him a brushing gallop would do his favourite no harm—and reminded him of the censure he had be-

stowed on me a minute before for bestowing a harsh epithet upon the boy.

But Joshua was not without his answer;—"Friend youth," he said, "thou didst speak of the lad's soul, which thou didst affirm belonged to the enemy, and of that thou couldst say nothing of thine own knowledge; on the contrary, I did but speak of his outward man, which will assuredly be suspended by a cord, if he mendeth not his manners. Men say that, young as he is, he is one of the Laird's gang."

"Of the Laird's gang!" said I, repeating the words in surprise—"Do you mean the person with whom I slept last night?—I heard you call him the Laird—Is he at the head of a gang?"

"Nay, I meant not precisely a gang," said the Quaker, who appeared in his haste to have spoken more than he intended—"a company or party, I should have said; but thus it is, friend Latimer, with the wisest men, when they permit themselves to be perturbed with passion, and speak as in a fever, or as with the tongue of the foolish and the forward. And although thou hast been hasty to mark my infirmity, yet I grieve not that thou

hast been a witness to it, seeing that the stumbles of the wise may be no less a caution to youth and inexperience, than is the fall of the foolish."

This was a sort of acknowledgment of what I had already begun to suspect—that my new friend's real goodness of disposition, joined to the acquired quietism of his religious sect, had been unable entirely to check the effervescence of a temper naturally warm and hasty.

Upon the present occasion, as if sensible he had displayed a greater degree of emotion than became his character, Joshua avoided farther allusion to Benjie and Solomon, and proceeded to solicit my attention to the natural objects around us, which increased in beauty and interest, as, still conducted by the meanders of the brook, we left the common behind us, and entered a more cultivated and enclosed country, where arable and pasture ground was agreeably varied with groves and hedges. Descending now almost close to the stream, our course lay through a little gate, into a pathway, kept with great neatness, the sides of which were decorated with trees and flowering shrubs of the hardier species; until, ascending

by a gentle slope, we issued from the grove, and stood almost at once in front of a low but very neat building, of an irregular form; and my guide, shaking me cordially by the hand, made me welcome to Mount Sharon.

The wood through which we had approached this little mansion was thrown around it both on the north and north-west, but breaking off into different directions, was intersected by a few fields, well watered and sheltered. The house fronted to the south-east, and from thence the pleasure-ground, or, I should rather say, the gardens, sloped down to the water. I afterwards understood that the father of the present proprietor had a considerable taste for horticulture, which had been inherited by his son, and had formed these gardens, which, with their shaven turf, pleached alleys, wildernesses, and exotic trees and shrubs, greatly excelled anything of the kind which had been attempted in the neighbourhood.

If there was a little vanity in the complacent smile with which Joshua Geddes saw me gaze with delight on a scene so different from the naked waste we had that day traversed in company, it

might surely be permitted to one, who, cultivating and improving the beauties of nature, had found therein, as he said, bodily health and a pleasing relaxation for the mind. At the bottom of the extended gardens the brook wheeled round in a wide semicircle, and was itself their boundary. The opposite side was no part of Joshua's domain, but the brook was there skirted by a precipitous rock of limestone, which seemed a barrier of Nature's own erecting around his little Eden of beauty, comfort, and peace.

"But I must not let thee forget," said the kind Quaker, "amidst thy admiration of these beauties of our little inheritance, that thy breakfast has been a light one."

So saying, Joshua conducted me to a small sashed door, opening under a porch amply mantled by honeysuckle and clematis, into a parlour of moderate size; the furniture of which, in plainness and excessive cleanliness, bore the characteristic marks of the sect to which the owner belonged.

Thy father's Hannah is generally allowed to be an exception to all Scottish housekeepers, and

stands unparalleled for cleanliness among the women of Auld Reekie; but the cleanliness of Hannah is sluttishness, compared to the scrupulous purifications of these people, who seem to carry into the minor decencies of life that conscientious rigour which they affect in their morals.

The parlour would have been gloomy, for the windows were small and the ceiling low; but the present proprietor had rendered it more cheerful by opening one end into a small conservatory, roofed with glass, and divided from the parlour by a partition of the same. I have never before seen this very pleasing manner of uniting the comforts of an apartment with the beauties of a garden, and I wonder it is not more practised by the great. Something of the kind is hinted at in a paper of the Spectator.

As I walked towards the conservatory to view it more closely, the parlour chimney engaged my attention. It was a pile of massive stone, entirely out of proportion to the size of the apartment. On the front had once been an armorial scutcheon; for the hammer, or chisel, which had been employed to deface the shield and crest, had left

uninjured the scroll beneath, which bore the pious motto, "*Trust in God.*" Black-letter, you know, was my early passion, and the tomb-stones in the Grey-Friar's Church-yard early yielded up to my knowledge as a decipherer what little they could tell of the forgotten dead.

Joshua Geddes paused when he saw my eye fixed on this relique of antiquity. "Thou canst read it?" he said.

I repeated the motto, and added, there seemed vestiges of a date.

"It should be 1537," said he; "for so long ago, at the least computation, did my ancestors, in the blinded times of Papistry, possess these lands, and in that year did they build their house."

"It is an ancient descent," said I, looking with respect upon the monument. "I am sorry the arms have been defaced."

It was perhaps impossible for my friend, Quaker as he was, to seem altogether void of respect for the pedigree which he began to recount to me, disclaiming all the while the vanity usually connected with the subject; in short, with the air of mingled melancholy, regret, and conscious

dignity, with which Jack Fawkes used to tell us, at College, of his ancestor's unfortunate connection with the Gunpowder-Plot.

"Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher,"—thus harangued Joshua Geddes of Mount Sharon,—"if we ourselves are nothing in the sight of Heaven, how much less than nothing must be our derivation from rotten bones and mouldering dust, whose immortal spirits have long since gone to their private account? Yes, friend Latimer, my ancestors were renowned among the ravenous and bloodthirsty men who then dwelt in this vexed country; and so much were they famed for successful freebooting, robbery, and bloodshed, that they are said to have been called Geddes, as likening them to the fish called a Jack Pike, or Luce, and in our country tongue, a *Ged*—a goodly distinction truly for Christian men! Yet did they paint this shark of the fresh waters upon their shields, and these profane priests of a wicked idolatry, the empty boasters called heralds, who make engraven images of fishes, fowls, and four-footed beasts, that men may fall down and worship them, assigned the

Ged for their device and escutcheon, and hewed it over their chimneys, and placed it above their tombs; and the men were elated in mind, and became yet more Ged-like, slaying, leading into captivity, and dividing the spoil, until the place where they dwelt obtained the name of Sharing-Knowe, from the booty which was there divided amongst them and their accomplices. But a better judgment was given to my father's father, Philip Geddes, who, after trying to light his candle at some of the vain wild-fires then held aloft at different meetings and steeple-houses, at length obtained a spark from the lamp of the blessed George Fox, who came into Scotland spreading light among darkness, as he himself hath written, as plentifully as fly the sparkles from the hoof of the horse which gallops swiftly along the stony road."—Here the good Quaker interrupted himself with, "And that is very true, I must go speedily to see after the condition of Solomon."

A quaker servant here entered the room with a tray, and inclining his head toward his master, but not after the manner of one who bows,

said composedly, "Thou art welcome home, friend Joshua, we expected thee not so early; but what hath befallen Solomon thy horse?"

"What hath befallen him, indeed!" said my friend; "hath he not been returned hither by the child whom they call Benjie?"

"He hath," said his domestic, "but it was after a strange fashion; for he came hither at a swift and furious pace, and flung the child Benjie from his back, upon the heap of dung which is in the stable-yard."

"I am glad of it," said Joshua, hastily,—"glad of it, with all my heart and spirit!—But stay, he is the child of the widow—hath the boy any hurt?"

"Not so," answered the servant, "for he rose and fled swiftly."

Joshua muttered something about a scourge, and then inquired after Solomon's present condition.

"He seetheth like a steaming cauldron," answered the servant; "and Bauldie, the lad, walketh him about the yard with a halter, lest he take cold."

Mr Geddes hastened to the stable-yard to view

personally the condition of his favourite, and I followed, to offer my counsel as a jockey—Don't laugh, Alan, sure I have jockeyship enough to assist a Quaker—in this unpleasing predicament.

The lad who was leading the horse seemed to be no Quaker, though his intercourse with the family had given him a touch of their prim sobriety of look and manner. He assured Joshua that his horse had sustained no injury, and I even hinted that the exercise would be of service to him. Solomon himself neighed towards his master, and rubbed his head against the good Quaker's shoulder, as if to assure him of his being quite well; so that Joshua returned in comfort to his parlour, where breakfast was now about to be displayed.

I have since learned that the affection of Joshua for his pony is considered as inordinate by some of his own sect; and that he has been much blamed for permitting it to be called by the name of Solomon, or any other name whatsoever; but he has gained so much respect and influence among them, that they overlook these foibles.

I learned from him (whilst the old servant, Jehoiachim, entering and re-entering, seemed to make no end of the materials which he brought in for breakfast) that his grandfather Philip, the convert of George Fox, had suffered much from the persecution to which these harmless devotees were subjected on all sides during that intolerant period, and much of their family estate had been dilapidated. But better days dawned on Joshua's father, who, connecting himself by marriage with a wealthy family of Quakers in Lancashire, engaged successfully in various branches of commerce, and redeemed the remnants of the property, changing its name from the Border appellation of Sharing-Knowe, to the evangelical appellation of Mount Sharon.

This Philip Geddes, as I before hinted, had imbibed the taste for horticulture and the pursuits of the florist, which are not uncommon among the peaceful sect he belonged to. He had destroyed the remnants of the old peel-house, substituting the modern mansion in its place; and while he reserved the hearth of his ancestors, in

memory of their hospitality, as also the pious motto which they had chanced to assume, he failed not to obliterate the worldly and military emblems displayed upon the shield and helmet, together with all their blazonry.

In a few minutes after Mr Geddes had concluded the account of himself and his family, his sister Rachel, the only surviving member of it, entered the room. Her appearance is remarkably pleasing, and although her age is certainly thirty at least, she still retains the shape and motion of an earlier period. The absence of everything like fashion or ornament was, as is usual, atoned for by the most perfect neatness and cleanliness of her dress; and her simple close cap was particularly suited to eyes which had the softness and simplicity of the dove's. Her features were also extremely agreeable, but had suffered a little through the ravages of that professed enemy to beauty, the small-pox; a disadvantage which was in part counterbalanced by a well-formed mouth, teeth like pearls, and a pleasing sobriety of smile, that seemed to wish good here and hereafter to every one she spoke to. You cannot make any

of your vile inferences here, Alan, for I have given a full-length picture of Rachel Geddes; so that you cannot say in this case, as in the letter I have just received, that she was passed over as a subject on which I feared to dilate. More of this anon.

Well, we settled to our breakfast after a blessing, or rather an extempore prayer, which Joshua made upon the occasion, and which the spirit moved him to prolong rather more than I felt altogether agreeable. Then, Alan, there was such a dispatching of the good things of the morning, as you have not witnessed since you have seen Darsie Latimer at breakfast. Tea and chocolate, eggs, ham, and pastry, not forgetting the broiled fish, disappeared with a celerity which seemed to astonish the good-humoured Quakers, who kept loading my plate with supplies, as if desirous of seeing whether they could, by any possibility, tire me out. One hint, however, I received, which put me in mind where I was. Miss Geddes had offered me some sweet-cake, which, at the moment, I declined; but presently afterwards, seeing it within my reach, I naturally

enough helped myself to a slice, and had just deposited it beside my plate, when Joshua, mine host, not with the air of Sancho's doctor, Tirtea Fuera, but in a very calm and quiet manner, lifted it away and replaced it on the dish, observing only, "Thou didst refuse it before, friend Latimer."

These good folks, Alan, make no allowance for what your good father calls the Aberdeen-man's privilege, of "taking his word again;" or what the wise call second thoughts.

Bating this slight hint, that I was among a precise generation, there was nothing in my reception that was peculiar—unless, indeed, I were to notice the solicitous and uniform kindness with which all the attentions of my new friends were seasoned, as if they were anxious to assure me that the neglect of worldly compliments interdicted by their sect, only served to render their hospitality more sincere. At length my hunger was satisfied, and the worthy Quaker, who, with look of great good-nature, had watched my progress, thus addressed his sister:

"This young man, Rachel, hath last night so-

journed in the tents of our neighbour, whom men call the Laird. I am sorry I had not met him the evening before, for our neighbour's hospitality is too unfrequently exercised to be well prepared with the means of welcome."

"Nay, but, Joshua," said Rachel, "if our neighbour hath done a kindness, thou shouldst not grudge him the opportunity; and if our young friend hath fared ill for a night, he will the better relish what Providence may send him of better fare."

"And that he may do so at leisure," said Joshua, "we will pray him, Rachel, to tarry a day or twain with us: he is young, and is but now entering upon the world, and our habitation may, if he will, be like a resting-place, from which he may look abroad upon the pilgrimage which he must make, and the path which he has to travel. —What sayest thou, friend Latimer? We constrain not our friends to our ways, and thou art, I think, too wise to quarrel with us for following our own fashions; and if we should even give thee a word of advice, thou wilt not, I think, be angry, so that it is spoken in season."

You know, Alan, how easily I am determined by anything resembling cordiality—and so, though a little afraid of the formality of my host and hostess, I accepted their invitation, providing I could get some messenger to send to Shepherd's Bush for my servant and portmanteau.

"Why, truly, friend," said Joshua, "thine outward frame would be improved by cleaner garments; but I will do thine errand myself at the Widow Gregson's house of reception, and send thy lad hither with thy clothes. Meanwhile, Rachel will shew thee these little gardens, and then will put thee in some way of spending thy time usefully, till our meal calls us together at the second hour after noon. I bid thee farewell for the present, having some space to walk, seeing I must leave the animal Solomon to his refreshing rest."

With these words, Mr Joshua Geddes withdrew. Some ladies we have known would have felt, or at least affected, reserve or embarrassment, at being left to do the honours of the grounds to (it will be out, Alan)—a smart young fellow—an

entire stranger. She went out for a few minutes, and returned in her plain cloak and bonnet, with her beaver-gloves, prepared to act as my guide, with as much simplicity as if she had been to wait upon thy father. So forth I sallied with my fair Quaker.

If the house at Mount Sharon be merely a plain and convenient dwelling, of moderate size, and small pretensions, the gardens and offices, though not extensive, might rival an earl's in point of care and expense. Rachel carried me first to her own favourite resort, a poultry yard, stocked with variety of domestic fowls, of the more rare as well as the more ordinary kinds, furnished with every accommodation which may suit their various habits. A rivulet which spread into a pond for the convenience of the aquatic birds, trickled over gravel as it passed through the yards dedicated to the land poultry, which were thus amply supplied with the means they use for digestion.

All these creatures seemed to recognize the presence of their mistress, and some especial fa-

vourites hastened to her feet, and continued to follow her as far as their limits permitted. She pointed out their peculiarities and qualities, with the discrimination of one who had made natural history her study; and I own I never looked on barn-door fowls with so much interest before —at least until they were boiled or roasted. I could not help asking the trying question, how she could order the execution of any of the creatures of which she seemed so careful.

" It was painful," she said, " but it was according to the law of their being. They must die; but they knew not when death was approaching; and in making them comfortable while they lived, we contributed to their happiness as much as the conditions of their existence permitted to us."

I am not quite of her mind, Alan. I do not believe either pigs or poultry would admit that the chief end of their being was to be killed and eaten. However, I did not press the argument, from which my Quakeress seemed rather desirous to escape; for, conducting me to the green-house, which was extensive, and filled with the choicest plants, she pointed out an aviary which occupied

the farther end, where, she said, she employed herself with attending the inhabitants, without being disturbed with any painful recollections concerning their future state.

I will not trouble you with an account of the various hot-houses and gardens, and their contents. No small sum of money must have been expended in erecting and maintaining them in the exquisite degree of good order which they exhibited. The family, I understood, were connected with that of the celebrated Millar, and had imbibed his taste for flowers, and for horticulture. But instead of murdering botanical names, I will rather conduct you to the *policy*, or pleasure-garden, which the taste of Joshua, or his father, had extended on the banks betwixt the house and river. This also, in contradistinction to the prevailing simplicity, was ornamented in an unusual degree. There were various compartments, the connection of which was well managed, and although the whole ground did not exceed five or six acres, it was so much varied as to seem four times larger. The space contained close alleys and open walks; a very pretty artificial

waterfall; a fountain also, consisting of a considerable jet-d'eau, whose streams glittered in the sun-beams, and exhibited a continual rainbow. There was a cabinet of verdure, as the French call it, to cool the summer heat, and there was a terrace sheltered from the north-east by a noble holly hedge, with all its glittering spears, where you might have the full advantage of the sun in the clear frosty days of winter.

I know that you, Alan, will condemn all this as bad and antiquated; for, ever since Landseer has described the Leasowes, and talked of Brown's imitations of nature, and Horace Walpole's late Essay on Gardening, you are all for simple nature—condemn walking up and down stairs in the open air, and declare for wood and wilderness. But *ne quid nimis*. I would not deface a scene of natural grandeur or beauty, by the introduction of crowded artificial decorations; yet such may, I think, be very interesting, where the situation otherwise has no particular beauties.

So that when I have a country-house, (who can say how soon?) you may look for grottoes, and cascades, and fountains; nay, if you vex me by

contradiction, perhaps I may go the length of a temple—so provoke me not, for you see of what enormities I am capable.

At any rate, Alan, had you condemned as artificial the rest of Friend Geddes's grounds, there is a willow-walk by the very verge of the stream, so sad, so solemn, and so silent, that it must have commanded your admiration. The brook, restrained at the ultimate boundary of the grounds by a natural dam-dike or ledge of rock, seemed, even in its present swoln state, scarcely to glide along; and the pale willow-trees, dropping their long branches into the stream, gathered around them little coronals of the foam that floated down from the more rapid stream above. The high rock which formed the opposite bank of the brook, was seen dimly through the branches, and its pale and splintered front, garlanded with long streamers of briars and other creeping plants, seemed a barrier between the quiet path which we trod, and the toiling and bustling world beyond. The path itself, following the sweep of the stream, made a very gentle curve; enough, however, completely to hide the

end of the walk, until you arrived at it. A deep and sullen sound, which increased as you walked forward, prepared you for this termination, which was indeed only a plain root-seat, from which you looked on a fall of about six or seven feet, where the brook flung itself over the dike of natural rock which I have already mentioned.

The quiet and twilight seclusion of this walk rendered it a fit scene for confidential communing; and having nothing more interesting to say to my fair Quaker, I took the liberty of questioning her about the Laird; for you are, or ought to be, aware, that next to discussing the affairs of the heart, the fair sex are most interested in those of their neighbours.

I did not conceal either my curiosity, or the check which it had received from Joshua, and I saw that my companion answered with embarrassment. "I must not speak otherwise than truly," said she; "and therefore I tell thee, that my brother dislikes, and that I fear, the man of whom thou hast asked me. Perhaps we are both wrong—but he is a man of violence, and hath

great influence over many, who, following the trade of sailors and fishermen, become as rude as the elements with which they contend. He hath no certain name among them, which is not unusual, their rude fashion being to distinguish each other by nicknames; and they have called him the Laird of the Lakes, (not remembering there should be no one called Lord, save one only,) in idle derision; the pools of salt water left by the tide among the sands being called the Lakes of Solway."

"Has he no other revenue than he derives from these sands?" I asked.

"That I cannot answer," replied Rachel; "men say that he wants not money, though he lives like an ordinary fisherman, and that he imparts freely of his means to the poor around him. They intimate, that he is a man of consequence, once deeply engaged in the unhappy affair of the rebellion, and even still too much in danger from the government to assume his own name. He is often absent from his cottage at Broken-burn-cliffs, for weeks and months."

"I should have thought," said I, "that the

government would scarce, at this time of day, be likely to proceed against any one even of the most obnoxious rebels. Many years have passed away——"

"It is true," she replied; "yet such persons may understand that their being connived at depends on their living in obscurity. But indeed there can nothing certain be known amongst these rude people. The truth is not in them—there are few but participate in the unlawful trade betwixt these parts and the neighbouring shore of England; and they are familiar with every species of falsehood and deceit."

"It is a pity," I remarked, "your brother should have neighbours of such a description, especially as I understand he is at some variance with them."

"Where, when, and about what matter?" answered Miss Geddes, with an eager and timorous anxiety, which made me regret having touched on the subject.

I told her, in a way as little alarming as I could devise, the purport of what passed betwixt this Laird of the Lakes and her brother, at their morning's interview.

• "You affright me much," answered she ; "it is this very circumstance which has scared me in the watches of the night. When my brother Joshua withdrew from an active share in the commercial concerns of my father, being satisfied with the portion of worldly substance which he already possessed, there were one or two undertakings in which he retained an interest, either because his withdrawing might have been prejudicial to friends, or because he wished to retain some mode of occupying his time. Amongst the more important of these, is a fishing station on the coast, where, by certain improved modes of erecting snares, opening at the advance of the tide, and shutting at the reflux, many more fish are taken than can be destroyed by those, who, like the men of Broken-burn, use only the boat-net and spear, or fishing-rod. They complain of these tide-nets, as men call them, as an innovation, and pretend to a right to remove and destroy them by the strong hand. I fear me, this man of violence, whom they call the Laird, will execute these his threats, which cannot be without both loss and danger to my brother."

"Mr Geddes," said I, "ought to apply to the civil Magistrate; there are soldiers at Dumfries who would be detached for his protection."

"Thou speakest, friend Latimer," answered the lady, "as one who is still in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. God forbid that we should endeavour to preserve nets of flax and stakes of wood, or the mammon of gain which they procure for us, by the hands of men of war, and at the risk of spilling human blood!"

"I respect your scruples," I replied; "but since such is your way of thinking, your brother ought to avert the danger by compromise or submission."

"Perhaps it would be best," answered Rachel; "but what can *I* say?—Even in the best trained temper there may remain some leaven of the old Adam; and I know not whether it is this or a better spirit that maketh my brother Joshua determine, that though he will not resist force by force, neither will he yield up his right to mere threats, or encourage wrong to others by yielding to menaces. His partners, he says, confide in his steadiness; and that he must not disappoint them

by yielding up their right for the fear of the threats of man, whose breath is in his nostrils."

This observation convinced me that the spirit of the old sharers of the spoil was not utterly departed even from the bosom of the peaceful Quaker; and I could not help confessing internally that Joshua had the right, when he averred that there was as much courage in sufferance as in exertion.

As we approached the further end of the willow-walk, the sullen and continuous sound of the dashing waters became still more and more audible, and at length rendered it difficult for us to communicate with each other. The conversation dropped, but apparently my companion continued to dwell upon the apprehensions which it had excited. At the bottom of the walk, we obtained a view of the cascade, where the swoln brook flung itself in foam and tumult over the natural barrier of rock, which seemed in vain to attempt to bar its course. I gazed with delight, and turning to express my sentiments to my companion, I observed that she had folded her hands in an attitude of sorrowful resignation, which

shewed her thoughts were far from the scene which lay before her. When she saw that her abstraction was observed, she resumed her former placidity of manner; and having given me sufficient time to admire this termination of our sober and secluded walk, proposed that we should return to the house through her brother's farm. "Even we Quakers, as we are called, have our little pride," she said; "and my brother Joshua would not forgive me, wêre *I not to shew thee the fields* which he taketh delight to cultivate, after the newest and best fashion; for which, I promise thee, he hath received much praise from good judges, as well as some ridicule from those who think it folly to improve on the customs of our ancestors."

As she spoke, she opened a low door, leading through a moss and ivy-covered wall, the boundary of the pleasure-ground, into the open fields; through which we moved by a convenient path, leading, with good taste and simplicity, by stile and hedge-row, through pasturage, and arable, and woodland; so that, in all ordinary weather,

the good man might, without even soiling his shoes, perform his perambulation round the farm. There were seats also, on which to rest; and though not adorned with inscriptions, nor quite so frequent in occurrence as those mentioned in the account of the Leasowes, their situation was always chosen with respect to some distant prospect to be commanded, or some home-view to be enjoyed.

But what struck me most in Joshua's domain, was the quantity and the tameness of the game. The hen partridge scarce abandoned the roost at the foot of the hedge where she had assembled her covey, though the path went close beside her; and the hare, remaining on her form, gazed at us as we past, with her full dark eye, or, rising lazily and hopping to a little distance, stood erect to look at us with more curiosity than apprehension. I observed to Miss Geddes the extreme tameness of these timid and shy animals, and she informed me that their confidence arose from protection in the summer, and relief during the winter.

"They are pets," she said, "of my brother,

who considers them as the better entitled to his kindness that they are a race persecuted by the world in general. He denieth himself," she said, "even the company of a dog, that these creatures may here at least enjoy undisturbed security. Yet even this harmless or humane propensity, or humour, hath given offence," she added, "to our dangerous neighbours."

She explained this, by telling me that my host of the preceding night was remarkable for his attachment to field-sports, which he pursued without much regard to the wishes of the individuals over whose property he followed them. The undefined mixture of respect and fear with which he was generally regarded, induced most of the neighbouring landholders to connive at what they would perhaps in another have punished as trespasses; but Joshua Geddes would not permit the intrusion of any one upon his premises, and as he had before offended several country neighbours, who, because he would neither shoot himself nor permit others to do so, compared him to the dog in the manger, so he now aggravated the displeasure which the Laird of the Lakes had

already conceived against him, by positively debarring him from pursuing his sport over his grounds.—"So that," said Rachel Geddes, "I sometimes wish our lot had been cast elsewhere than in these pleasant borders, where, if we had less of beauty around us, we might have had a neighbourhood of peace and good-will."

We at length returned to the house, where Miss Geddes shewed me a small study, containing a little collection of books, in two separate presses.

"These," said she, pointing to the smaller press, "will, if thou bestowest thy leisure upon them, do thee good; and these," pointing to the other and larger cabinet, "can, I believe, do thee little harm. Some of our people do indeed hold, that every writer who is not with us is against us; but brother Joshua is mitigated in his opinions, and correspondeth with our friend John Scott of Amwell, who hath himself constructed verses well approved of, even in the world.—I wish thee many good things till our family meet at the hour of dinner."

Left alone, I tried both collections; the first

consisted entirely of religious and controversial tracts, and the latter formed a small selection of history, and of moral writers, both in prose and verse.

Neither promising much amusement, thou hast, in these close pages, the fruits of my tediousness; and truly, I think, writing history (one's self being the subject) is as amusing as reading that of foreign countries, at any time.

Sam, still more drunk than sober, arrived in due time with my portmanteau, and enabled me to put my dress into order, better befitting this temple of cleanliness and decorum, where, (to conclude,) I believe I will be a sojourner for more days than one.

P. S.—I have noted your adventure, as you home-bred youths may perhaps term it, concerning the visit of your doughty Laird. We travellers hold such an incident of no great consequence, though it may serve to embellish the uniform life of Brown's Square. But art thou not ashamed to attempt to interest one who is seeing the world at large, and studying human

nature on a large scale, by so bald a narrative? Why, what does it amount to, after all, but that a Tory Laird dined with a Whig Lawyer? no very uncommon matter, especially as you state Mr Herries to have lost the estate, though retaining the designation.—The Laird behaves with haughtiness and impertinence—nothing out of character in that: Is *not* kicked down stairs, as he ought to have been, were Alan Fairford half the man that he would wish his friends to think him.—Ay, but then, as the young lawyer, instead of shewing his friend the door, chose to make use of it himself, he overheard the Laird aforesaid ask the old lawyer concerning Darsie Latimer—no doubt earnestly inquiring after the handsome, accomplished inmate of his family, who has so lately made Themis his bow, and declined the honour of following her farther. You laugh at me for my air-drawn castles; but confess, have they not surer footing, in general, than two words spoken by such a man as Herries? And yet—and yet, I would rally the matter off, Alan; but in dark nights, even the glow-worm becomes an object of lustre, and to one plunged in my un-

certainty and ignorance, the slightest gleam that promises intelligence is interesting. My life is like the subterranean river in the Peak of Derby, visible only where it crosses the celebrated cavern. I am here, and thus much I know; but where I have sprung from, or whither my course of life is like to tend, who shall tell me? Your father, too, seemed interested and alarmed, and talked of writing; would to Heaven he may!—I send daily to the post-town for letters.

LETTER VIII

ALAN FAIRFORD TO DARSIE LATIMER.

Thou may'st clap thy wings and crow as thou pleasest. You go in search of adventures, but adventures come to me unsought for; and oh in what a pleasing shape came mine, since it came in form of a client—and a fair client to boot! What think you of that, Darsie, you who are such a sworn squire of dames? Will this not match my adventures with thine, that hunt salmon on horseback, and eclipse the history of a whole tribe of Broadbrims?—but I must proceed methodically.

When I returned to-day from the College, I was surprised to see a broad grin distending the adust countenance of the faithful James Wilkin-

son, which, as the circumstance seldom happens above once a-year, was matter of some surprise Moreover, he had a knowing glance with his eye, which I should have as soon expected from a dumb waiter—an article of furniture to which James, in his usual state, may be happily assimilated. "What the devil is the matter, James?"

"The devil may be in the matter, for aught I ken," said James, with another provoking grin; "for here has been a woman calling for you, Maister Alan."

"A woman calling for me?" said I in surprise; for you know well, that excepting old Aunt Peggie, who comes to dinner of a Sunday, and the still older Lady Bedrooket, who calls ten times a-year for the quarterly payment of her jointure of four hundred merks, a female scarce approaches our threshold, as my father visits all his female clients at their own lodgings. James protested, however, that there had been a lady calling, and for me. 'As bonny a lass as I have seen,' added James, 'since I was in the Fusiliers, and kept company with Peg Baxter.' Thou

knowest all James's gay recollections go back to the period of his military service, the years he has spent in ours having probably been dull enough.

"Did the lady leave no name nor place of address?"

"No," replied James; "but she asked when you wad be at hame, and I appointed her for twelve o'clock, when the house wad be quiet, and your father at the Bank."

"For shame, James! how can you think my father's being at home or abroad could be of consequence?—The lady is of course a decent person."

"I'se uphaud her that, sir—she is nane of your —*whew*—[Here James supplied a blank with a low whistle]—but I didna ken—my maister makes an unco wark if a woman comes here."

I passed into my own room, not ill-pleased that my father was absent, notwithstanding I had thought it proper to rebuke James for having so contrived it. I disarranged my books, to give them the appearance of a graceful confusion on the table, and laying my foils (useless since

your departure) across the mantle-piece, that the lady might see I was *tam Marte quam Mercurio*—I endeavoured to dispose my dress, so as to resemble an elegant morning dishabille—gave my hair the general shade of powder which marks the gentleman—laid my watch and seals on the table, to mark that I understood the value of time;—and when I had made all these arrangements, of which I am a little ashamed when I think of them, I had nothing better to do than to watch the dial-plate till the index pointed to noon. Five minutes elapsed which I allowed for variation of clocks—five minutes more rendered me anxious and doubtful—and five minutes more would have made me impatient.

Laugh as thou wilt; but remember, Darsie, I was a lawyer, expecting his first client—a young man, how strictly bred up I need not remind you, expecting a private interview with a young and beautiful woman. But ere the third term of five minutes had elapsed, the door-bell was heard to tinkle low and modestly, as if touched by some timid hand.

James Wilkinson, swift in nothing, is, as thou

knowest, peculiarly slow in answering the door-bell; and I reckoned on five minutes good, ere his solemn step should have ascended the stair. Time enough, thought I, for a peep through the blinds, and was hastening to the window accordingly. But I reckoned without my host; for James, who had his own curiosity as well as I, was lying *perdu* in the lobby, ready to open at the first tinkle; and there was, "This way, ma'am—Yes, ma'am—The lady, Mr Alan," before I could get to the chair in which I proposed to be discovered, seated in all legal dignity. The consciousness of being half caught in the act of peeping, joined to that awkward bashfulness of which I am told the law will soon free me, kept me standing on the floor in some confusion; while the lady, disconcerted on her part, remained on the threshold of the room. James Wilkinson, who had his senses most about him, and was perhaps willing to prolong his stay in the apartment, busied himself in setting a chair for the lady, and recalled me to my good-breeding by the hint. I invited her to take possession of it, and bid James withdraw.

My visitor was undeniably a lady, and probably considerably above the ordinary rank—very modest, too, judging from the mixture of grace and timidity with which she moved, and at my entreaty sat down. Her dress was, I should suppose, both handsome and fashionable; but it was much concealed by a walking-cloak of green silk, fancifully embroidored; in which, though heavy for the season, her person was enveloped, and which, moreover, was furnished with a hood.

The devil take that hood, Darsie! for I was just able to distinguish that, pulled as it was over the face, it concealed from me, as I was convinced, one of the prettiest countenances I have seen, and which, from a sense of embarrassment, seemed to be crimsoned with a deep blush. I could see her complexion was beautiful—her chin finely turned—her lips coral—and her teeth rivals to ivory. But further the deponent sayeth not; for a clasp of gold, ornamented with a sapphire, closed the envious mantle under the incognita's throat, and the cursed hood concealed entirely the upper part of the face.

I ought to have spoke first, that is certain; but

ere I could get my phrases well arranged, the young lady, rendered desperate, I suppose, by my hesitation, opened the conversation herself.

"I fear I am an intruder, sir—I expected to meet an elderly gentleman."

This brought me to myself. "My father, madam, perhaps. But you inquired for Alan Fairford—my father's name is Alexander."

"It is Mr Alan Fairford, undoubtedly, with whom I wished to speak," she said, with greater confusion; "but I was told that he was advanced in life."

"Some mistake, madam, I presume, betwixt my father and myself—our Christian names have the same initials, though the terminations are different.—I—I—I would esteem it a most fortunate mistake if I could have the honour of supplying my father's place in anything that could be of service to you."

"You are very obliging, sir." A pause, during which she seemed undetermined whether to rise or sit still.

"I am just about to be called to the bar, madam," said I, in hopes to remove her scruples to

open her case to me; "and if my advice or opinion could be of the slightest use—although I cannot presume to say that they are much to be depended upon, yet——"

The lady arose. "I am truly sensible of your kindness, sir; and I have no doubt of your talents. I will be very plain with you—it *is* you whom I came to visit; although, now that we are met, I find it will be much better that I should commit my communication to writing."

"I hope, madam, you will not be so cruel—so tantalizing, I would say. Consider you are my first client—your business my first consultation—do not do me the displeasure of withdrawing your confidence because I am a few years younger than you seem to have expected—My attention shall make amends for my want of experience."

"I have no doubt of either," said the lady, in a grave tone, calculated to restrain the air of gallantry with which I had endeavoured to address her. "But when you have received my letter, you will find good reasons assigned why a writ-

ten communication will best suit my purpose. I wish you, sir, a good morning." And she left the apartment, her poor baffled counsellor scraping, and bowing, and apologizing for anything that might have been disagreeable to her, although the front of my offence seems to be my having been discovered to be younger than my father.

The door was opened—out she went—walked along the pavement, turned down the close, and put the sun I believe into her pocket when she disappeared, so suddenly did dulness and darkness sink down on the square, when she was no longer visible. I stood for a moment as if I had been senseless, not recollecting what a fund of entertainment I must have supplied to our watchful friends on the other side of the green Then it darted on my mind that I might dog her, and ascertain at least who or what she was. Off I set—ran down the close, where she was no longer to be seen, and demanded of one of the dyer's lads whether he had seen a lady go down the close, or had observed which way she turned.

"A leddy!"—said the dyer, staring at me with his rainbow countenance. "Mr Alan, what takes you out, rinning like daft, without your hat?"

"The devil take my hat!" answered I, running back, however, in quest of it; snatched it up, and again sallied forth. But as I reached the head of the close once more, I had sense enough to recollect that all pursuit would be now in vain. Besides, I saw my friend, the journeyman dyer, in close confabulation with a pea-green personage of his own profession, and was conscious, like Scrub, that they talked of me, because they laughed consumedly. I had no mind, by a second sudden appearance, to confirm the report that Advocate Fairford was "gaen daft," which had probably spread from Campbell's close-foot to the Meal-market Stairs; and so slunk back within my own hole again.

My first employment was to remove all traces of that elegant and fanciful disposition of my effects, from which I had hoped for so much credit; for I was now ashamed and angry at having thought an instant about the mode of re-

ceiving a visit which had commenced so agreeably, but terminated in a manner so unsatisfactory. I put my folios in their places—threw the foils into the dressing-closet—tormenting myself all the while with the fruitless doubt, whether I had missed an opportunity or escaped a stratagem, or whether the young person had been really startled, as she seemed to intimate, by the extreme youth of her intended legal adviser. The mirror was not unnaturally called in to aid; and that cabinet-counsellor pronounced me rather short, thick-set, with a cast of features fitter, I trust, for the bar than the ball—not handsome enough for blushing virgins to pine for my sake, or even to invent sham cases to bring them to my chambers—yet not ugly enough either to scare those away who came on real business—dark, to be sure, but—*nigri sunt hyacinthi*—there are pretty things to be said in favour of that complexion.

At length—as common sense will get the better in all cases, when a man will but give it fair play—I began to stand convicted in my own mind, as an ass before the interview, for having expect-

ed too much—an ass during the interview, for having failed to extract the lady's real purpose—and an especial ass, now that it was over, for thinking so much about it. But I can think of nothing else, and therefore I am determined to think of this to some good purpose.

You remember Murtough O'Hara's defence of the Catholic doctrine of confession; because, "by his soul, his sins were always a great burthen to his mind, till he had told them to the priest; and once confessed, he never thought more about them." I have tried his receipt, therefore; and having poured my secret mortification into thy trusty ear, I will think no more about this maid of the mist,

Who, with no face, as 'twere, outfaced me.

—— four o'clock.

Plague on her green mantle, she can be nothing better than a fairy; she keeps possession of my head yet! All during dinner time I was terribly absent; but, luckily, my father gave the whole credit of my reverie to the abstract nature

of the doctrine, *Vinco vincentem, ergo vinco te*; upon which brocard of law the Professor this morning lectured. So I got an early dismissal to my own crib, and here am I studying, in one sense, *vincere vincentem*, to get the better of the silly passion of curiosity—I think—I think it amounts to nothing else—which has taken such possession of my imagination, and is perpetually worrying me with the question—will she write or no? She will not—she will not! So says Reason, and adds, Why should she take the trouble to enter into correspondence with one, who, instead of a bold, alert, prompt gallant, proved a chicken-hearted boy, and left her the whole awkwardness of explanation, which he should have met half-way? But then, says Fancy, she *will* write, for she was not a bit that sort of person whom you, Mr Reason, in your wisdom, take her to be. She was disconcerted enough, without my adding to her distress by any impudent conduct on my part. And she will write, for ——— By Heaven, she HAS written, Darsie, and with a vengeance!—Here is her letter, thrown into the kitchen by a cadie, too faithful to be

bribed, either by money or whiskey, to say more than that he received it, with sixpence, from an ordinary-looking woman, as he was plying on his station near the Cross.

"FOR ALAN FAIRFORD, ESQUIRE, BARRISTER.

"SIR,

"Excuse my mistake of to-day. I had accidentally learned that Mr Darsie Latimer had an intimate friend and associate in a Mr A. Fairford. When I inquired for such a person, he was pointed out to me at the Cross, (as, I think, the Exchange of your city is called,) in the character of a respectable elderly man—your father, as I now understand. On inquiry at Brown's Square, where I understood he resided, I used the full name of Alan, which naturally occasioned you the trouble of this day's visit. Upon further inquiry, I am led to believe that you will be the person most active in the matter to which I am now about to direct your attention; and I regret much that circumstances, arising out of my

own particular situation, prevent my communicating to you personally what I now apprize you of in this matter.

"Your friend, Mr Darsie Latimer, is in a situation of considerable danger. You are doubtless aware, that he has been cautioned not to trust himself in England—Now, if he has not absolutely transgressed this friendly injunction, he has at least approached as nearly to the menaced danger as he could do, consistently with the letter of the prohibition. He has chosen his abode in a neighbourhood very perilous to him; and it is only by a speedy return to Edinburgh, or at least by a removal to some more remote part of Scotland, that he can escape the machinations of those whose enmity he has to fear. I must speak in mystery, but my words are not the less certain; and, I believe, you know enough of your friend's fortunes to be aware, that I could not write this much without being even more intimate with them than you are.

"If he cannot, or will not, take the advice here given, it is my opinion that you should join him, if possible, without delay, and urge, by your per-

sonal presence and entreaty, the arguments which may prove ineffectual in writing. One word more, and I implore of your candour to take it as it is meant. No one supposes that Mr Fairford's zeal in his friend's service, needs to be quickened by mercenary motives. But report says, that Mr Alan Fairford not having yet entered on his professional career, may, in such a case as this, want the means, though he cannot want the inclination, to act with promptitude. The enclosed note, Mr Alan Fairford must be pleased to consider as his first professional emolument; and she who sends it hopes it will be the omen of unbounded success, though the fee comes from a hand so unknown as that of

"GREEN MANTLE."

A bank note of £20 was the enclosure, and the whole incident left me speechless with astonishment. I am not able to read over the beginning of my own letter, which forms the introduction to this extraordinary communication. I only know that, though mixed with a quantity of foolery, (God knows very much different from my

present feelings,) it gives an account sufficiently accurate, of the mysterious person from whom this letter comes, and that I have neither time nor patience to separate the absurd commentary from the text, which it is so necessary you should know.

Combine this warning, so strangely conveyed, with the caution impressed on you by your London correspondent, Griffiths, against your visiting England—with the character of your Laird of the Solway Lakes—with the lawless habits of the people on that frontier country, where warrants are not easily executed, owing to the jealousy entertained by either country of the legal interference of the other; remember, that even Sir John Fielding said to my father, that he could never trace a rogue beyond the Brigg-end of Dumfries—think that the distinctions of Whig and Tory, Papist and Protestant, still keep that country in a loose and comparatively lawless state—think of all this, my dearest Darsie, and remember that, while at this Mount Sharon of yours, you are residing with a family actually menaced with violence, and who, while

their obstinacy provokes violence, are by principle bound to abstain from resistance.

Nay, let me tell you, professionally, that the legality of the mode of fishing practised by your friend Joshua, is greatly doubted by our best lawyers; and that, if the stake-nets be actually an unlawful obstruction raised on the channel of the estuary, an assembly who shall proceed, *via facti*, to pull down and destroy them, would not, in the eye of the law, be esteemed guilty of a riot. So, by remaining where you are, you are likely to be engaged in a quarrel with which you have nothing to do, and thus to enable your enemies, whoever these may be, to execute, amid the confusion of a general hubbub, whatever designs they may have against your personal safety. Black-fishers, poachers, and smugglers, are a sort of gentry that will not be much checked, either by your Quaker's texts, or by your chivalry. If you are Don Quixote enough to lay lance in rest, in defence of those of the stake-net, and of the sad-coloured garment, I pronounce you but a lost knight; for, as I said before, I doubt if these potent redressers of wrongs, the justices and con-

stables, will hold themselves warranted to interfere. In a word, return, my dear Amadis; the adventure of the Solway-nets is not reserved for your worship. Come back, and I will be your faithful Sancho Panza upon a more hopeful quest. We will beat about together, in search of this Urganda, the Unknown She of the Green Mantle, who can read this, the riddle of thy fate, better than Wise Eppie of Buckhaven, or Cassandra herself.

I would fain trifle, Darsie; for, in debating with you, jests will sometimes go farther than arguments; but I am sick at heart, and cannot keep the ball up. If you have a moment's regard for the friendship we have so often vowed to each other, let my wishes for once prevail over your own venturous and romantic temper. I am quite serious in thinking, that the information communicated to my father by this Mr Herries, and the admonitory letter of the young lady, bear upon each other; and that, were you here, you might learn something from one or other, or from both, that might throw light on your birth and parentage. You will not, surely,

prefer an idle whim to the prospect which is thus held out to you?

I would, agreeably to the hint I have received in the young lady's letter, (for I am confident that such is her condition,) have ere now been with you to urge these things, instead of pouring them out upon paper. But you know that the day for my trials is appointed; I have already gone through the form of being introduced to the examinators, and have gotten my titles assigned me. All this should not keep me at home, but my father would view any irregularity upon this occasion as a mortal blow to the hopes which he has cherished most fondly during his life; viz. my being called to the bar with some credit. For my own part, I know there is no great difficulty in passing these formal examinations, else how have some of our acquaintance got through them? But, to my father, these formalities compose an august and serious solemnity, to which he has long looked forward, and my absenting myself at this moment would well nigh drive him distracted. Yet I shall go altogether distracted myself, if I have not an instant assurance from

you that you are hastening hither—Meanwhile I have desired Hannah to get your little crib into the best order possible. I cannot learn that my father has yet written to you; nor has he spoken more of his communication with Birrenswork; but when I let him have some inkling of the dangers you are at present incurring, I know my request that you will return immediately, will have his cordial support.

Another reason yet—I must give a dinner, as usual, upon my admission, to our friends; and my father, laying aside all his usual considerations of economy, has desired it may be in the best style possible. Come hither then, dear Darsie! or, I protest to you, I shall send examination, admission-dinner, and guests, to the devil, and come, in person, to fetch you with a vengeance. Thine, in much anxiety,

A. F.

LETTER IX.

ALEXANDER FAIRFORD, W. S. TO MR DARSIE LATIMER.

DEAR MR DARSIE,

HAVING been your *factor loco tutoris*, or rather, I ought to say, in correctness, (since I acted without warrant from the Court,) your *negotiorum gestor*; that connection occasions my present writing. And although having rendered an account of my intromissions, which have been regularly approved of, not only by yourself, (whom I could not prevail with to look at more than the docket and sum total,) but also by the worthy Mr Samuel Griffiths of London, being the hand through whom the remittances were made, I may, in some sense, be considered as to you

functus officio; yet, to speak facetiously, I trust you will not hold me accountable as a vitious intromitter, should I be still occasionally interested in your welfare. My motives for writing, at this time, are twofold.

I have met with a Mr Herries of Birrenswork, a gentleman of very ancient descent, but who hath in time past been in difficulties, nor do I know if his affairs are yet well redd. Birrenswork says, that he believes he was very familiar with your father, whom he states to have been called Ralph Latimer of Langcote-Hall, in Westmoreland; and he mentioned family affairs, which it may be of the highest importance to you to be acquainted with; but as he seemed to decline to communicate them to me, I could not civilly urge him thereanent. Thus much I know, that Mr Herries had his own share in the late desperate and unhappy matter of 1745, and was in trouble about it, although that is probably now over. Moreover, although he did not profess the Popish religion openly, he had an eye that way. And both of these are reasons why I have hesitated to recom-

mend him to a youth who may be hath not altogether so well founded his opinions concerning Kirk and State, that they might not be changed by some sudden wind of doctrine. For I have observed ye, Master Darsie, to be rather tinctured with the old leaven of prelacy—this under your leave; and although God forbid that you should be in any manner disaffected to the Protestant Hanoverian line, yet ye have ever loved to hear the blawing, blazing stories which the Hieland gentlemen tell of these troublous times, which, if it were their will, they had better pretermit, as tending rather to shame than to honour. It is come to me also by a side-wind, as I may say, that you have been neighbouring more than was needful among some of the pestilent sect of Quakers—a people who own neither priest, nor king, nor civil magistrate, nor the fabric of our law, and will not depone either *in civilibus* or *criminalibus*, be the loss to the lieges what it may Anent which heresies, it were good ye read "the Snake in the Grass," or "the Foot out of the Snare," being both well-approved tracts, touching these doctrines.

Now, Mr Darsie, ye are to judge for yourself whether ye can safely to your soul's weal remain longer among these Papists and Quakers; these defections on the right hand, and fallings away on the left; and truly if you can confidently resist these evil examples of doctrine, I think ye may as well tarry in the bounds where ye are, until you see Mr Herries of Birrenswork, who does assuredly know more of your matters than I thought had been communicated to any man in Scotland. I would fain have precognosced him myself on these affairs, but found him unwilling to speak out, as I have partly intimated before.

To call a new cause—I have the pleasure to tell you, that Alan has passed his private Scots Law examinations with good approbation—a great relief to my mind; especially as worthy Mr Pest told me in my ear there was no fear of the "callant," as he familiarly called him, which gives me great heart. His public trials, which are nothing in comparison, are to take place, by order of the Honourable Dean of Faculty, on Wednesday first; and on Friday he puts on the gown, and gives a bit chack of dinner to his friends and ac-

quaintances, as is, you know, the custom. Your company will be wished for there, Master Darsie, by more than him, which I regret to think is impossible to have, as well by your engagements, as that our cousin, Peter Fairford, comes from the west on purpose, and we have no place to offer him but your chamber in the wall. And, to be plain with you, after my use and wont, Master Darsie, it may be as well that Alan and you do not meet till he is hefted as it were to his new calling. You are a pleasant gentleman, and full of daffing, which may well become you, as you have enough (as I understand) to uphold your merry humour. If you considered the matter wisely, you would perchance consider that a man of substance should have a douce and staid demeanour; yet you are so far from growing grave and considerate with the increase of your annual income, that the more you get, the merrier I think you grow. But this must be at your own pleasure, so far as you are concerned. Alan, however, (overpassing my small savings,) has the world to win; and louping and laughing, as you

and he are wont to do, would soon make the powder flee out of his wig, and the pence out of his pocket. Nevertheless, I trust you will meet when you return from your rambles; for there is a time, as the wise man sayeth, for gathering, and a time for casting away; and it is the part of a man of sense to take the gathering time first. I remain, dear sir, your well-wishing friend, and obedient to command,

ALEXANDER FAIRFORD.

P. S.—Alan's Thesis is upon the title *De periculo et commodo rei venditæ*, and is a very pretty piece of Latinity.—Ross-House, in our neighbourhood, is nearly finished, and is thought to excel Duff-House in ornature.

LETTER X.

DARSIE LATIMER TO ALAN FAIRFORD.

THE plot thickens, Alan. I have your letter, and also one from your father. The last makes it impossible for me to comply with the kind request which the former urges. No—I cannot be with you, Alan; and that, for the best of all reasons—I cannot and ought not to counteract your father's anxious wishes. I do not take it unkind of him that he desires my absence. It is natural that he should wish for his son, what his son so well deserves—the advantage of a wiser and steadier companion than I seem to him. And yet I am sure I have often laboured hard enough to acquire that decency of demeanour which can no

more be suspected of breaking bounds, than an owl of catching a butterfly.

But it was in vain that I have knitted my brows till I had the headache, in order to acquire the reputation of a grave, solid, and well-judging youth. Your father always has discovered, or thought that he discovered, a hare-brained eccentricity lying folded among the wrinkles of my forehead, which rendered me a perilous associate for the future counsellor and ultimate judge. Well, Corporal Nym's philosophy must be my comfort—"Things must be as they may."—I cannot come to your father's house, where he wishes not to see me; and as to your coming hither,—by all that is dear to me, I vow that if you are guilty of such a piece of reckless folly—not to say undutiful cruelty, considering your father's thoughts and wishes—I will never speak to you again as long as I live! I am perfectly serious. And besides, your father, while he in a manner prohibits me from returning to Edinburgh, gives me the strongest reasons for continuing for a little while longer in this country, by holding out the hope that I may receive from your old friend,

Mr Herries of Birrenswork, some particulars concerning my origin, with which that ancient recusant seems to be acquainted.

That gentleman mentioned the name of a family in Westmoreland, with which he supposes me connected. My inquiries here after such a family have been ineffectual, for the borderers, on either side, know little of each other. But I will doubtless find some English person at whom to make inquiries, since the confounded fetter-lock clapped on my movements by old Griffiths, prevents me repairing to England in person. At least, the prospect of obtaining some information is greater here than elsewhere; it will be an apology for my making a longer stay in this neighbourhood, a line of conduct which seems to have your father's sanction, whose opinion must be sounder than that of your wandering damoselle.

If the road were paved with dangers which leads to such a discovery, I cannot for a moment hesitate to tread it. But in fact there is no peril in the case. If the Tritons of the Solway shall proceed to pull down honest Joshua's

tide-nets, I am neither Quixote enough in disposition, nor Goliah enough in person, to attempt their protection. I have no idea of attempting to prop a falling house, by putting my shoulders against it. And indeed Joshua gave me a hint, that the company which he belongs to, injured in the way threatened, (some of them being men who thought after the fashion of the world,) would pursue the rioters at law, and recover damages, which probably his own ideas of non-resistance will not prevent his participating in. Therefore the whole affair will take its course as law will, as I only mean to interfere when it may be necessary to direct the course of the plaintiffs to thy chambers; and I request they may find thee intimate with all the Scottish statutes concerning salmon-fisheries, from the *Lex Aquarum*, downward.

As for thy Lady of the Mantle, I will lay a wager that the sun so bedazzled thine eyes on that memorable morning, that everything thou didst look upon seemed green; and notwithstanding James Wilkinson's experience in the fuziliers, as well as his negative whistle, I will ven-

ture to hold a crown that she is but a Peg-a-Ramsay after all. Let not even the gold persuade you to the contrary. She may make a shift to cause you to disgorge that, and (immense spoil!) a session's fees to boot, if you look not all the sharper about you. Or if it should be otherwise, and if indeed there lurk some mystery under this visitation, credit me, it is one which thou canst not penetrate, nor can I as yet even attempt to explain it; since, if I prove mistaken, and mistaken I may easily be, I would be fain to creep into Phalaris's bull, were it standing before me ready heated, rather than be roasted with thy raillery. Do not tax me with want of confidence; for the instant I can throw any light on the matter, thou shalt have it; but while I am only blundering about in the dark, I do not choose to call wise folks to see me, perchance, break my nose against a post. So if you marvel at this,

E'en marvel on till time makes all things plain.

In the meantime, kind Alan, let me proceed in my diurnal.

On the third or fourth day after my arrival at

Mount Sharon, Time, that bald sexton to whom I have just referred you, did certainly limp more heavily along with me than he had done at first. The quaint morality of Joshua, and Huguenot simplicity of his sister, began to lose much of their raciness with their novelty, and my mode of life, by dint of being very quiet, began to feel abominably dull. It was, as thou say'st, as if the Quakers had put the sun in their pockets—all around was soft and mild, and even pleasant; but there was, in the whole routine, a uniformity, a want of interest, a helpless and hopeless languor, which rendered life insipid. No doubt, my worthy host and hostess felt none of this void, this want of excitation, which was becoming oppressive to their guest. They had their little round of occupations, charities, and pleasures; Rachel had her poultry-yard and conservatory, and Joshua his garden. Besides this, they enjoyed, doubtless, their devotional meditations; and, on the whole, time glided softly and imperceptibly on with them, though to me, who long for stream and cataract, it seemed absolutely to stand still. I thought of

returning to Shepherd's Bush, and began to think, with some hankering, after little Benjie and the rod. The imp has ventured hither, and hovers about to catch a peep of me now and then; I suppose the little sharper is angling for a few more sixpences. But this would have been, in Joshua's eyes, a return of the washed sow to wallowing in the mire, and I resolved, while I remained his guest, to spare him so violent a shock to his prejudices. The next point was, to shorten the time of my proposed stay; but, alas! that I felt to be equally impossible. I had named a week; and however rashly my promise had been pledged, it must be held sacred, even according to the letter, from which the Friends permit no deviation.

All these considerations wrought me up to a kind of impatience yesterday evening; so that I snatched up my hat, and prepared for a sally beyond the cultivated farm and ornamented grounds of Mount Sharon, just as if I were desirous to escape from the realms of art, into those of free and unconstrained nature.

I was scarce more delighted when I first entered this peaceful demesne, than I now was—such is the instability and inconsistency of human nature!—when I escaped from it to the open downs, which had formerly seemed so waste and dreary. The air I breathed felt purer and more bracing. The clouds, riding high upon a summer breeze, drove, in gay succession, over my head, now obscuring the sun, now letting its rays stream in transient flashes upon various parts of the landscape, and especially upon the broad mirror of the distant Frith of Solway.

I advanced on the scene with the light step of a liberated captive; and, like John Bunyan's Pilgrim, could have found in my heart to sing as I went on my way. It seemed as my gaiety had accumulated while suppressed, and that I was, in my present joyous mood, entitled to expend the savings of the previous week. But just as I was about to uplift a merry stave, I heard, to my joyful surprise, the voice of three or more choristers, singing, with considerable success, the lively old catch,

"For all our men were very very merry,
And all our men were drinking:
There was two men of mine,
Three men of thine,
And three that belonged to old Sir Thom o' Lyne;
As they went to the ferry, they were very very merry,
And all our men were drinking."

As the chorus ended, there followed a loud and hearty laugh by way of cheers. Attracted by sounds which were so congenial to my present feelings, I made towards the spot from which they came,—cautiously however, for the Downs, as had been repeatedly hinted to me, had no good name; and the attractions of the music, without rivalling that of the Syrens in melody, might have been followed by similarly inconvenient consequences to an incautious amateur.

I crept on, therefore, trusting that the sinuosities of the ground, broken as it was into knolls and sand-pits, would permit me to obtain a sight of the musicians before I should be observed by them. As I advanced, the old ditty was again raised. The voices seemed those of a man and two boys; they were rough, but kept good time, and were managed with too much skill to belong to the ordinary country people.

"Jack looked at the sun, and cried, Fire, fire, fire;
Tom stabled his keffel in Birkendale mire;
Jem started a calf, and halloo'd for a stag;
Will mounted a gate-post instead of his nag:
For all our men were very very merry,
And all our men were drinking;
There were two men of mine,
Three men of thine,
And three that belonged to old Sir Thom o' Lyne;
As they went to the ferry, they were very very merry,
For all our men were drinking."

The voices, as they mixed in their several parts, and ran through them, untwisting and again entwining all the links of the merry old catch, seemed to have a little touch of the bacchanalian spirit which they celebrated, and shewed plainly that the musicians were engaged in the same joyous revel as the *menyie* of old Sir Thom a Lyne. At length I came within sight of them, three in number, where they sat cosily niched, into what you might call a *bunker*, a little sand-pit, dry and snug, and surrounded by its banks, and a screen of whins in full bloom.

The only one of the trio whom I recognized as a personal acquaintance, was the notorious little Benjie, who, having just finished his stave, was cramming a huge luncheon of pie-crust into

his mouth with one hand, while in the other he held a foaming tankard, his eyes dancing with all the glee of a forbidden revel; and his features, which have at all times a mischievous archness of expression, confessing the full sweetness of stolen waters and bread eaten in secret.

There was no mistaking the profession of the male and female, who were partners with Benjie in these merry doings. The man's long loose-bodied great-coat; (wrap-rascal, as the vulgar term it,) the fiddle-case, with its straps, which lay beside him, and a small knapsack which might contain his few necessaries; a clear grey eye; features which, in contending with many a storm, had not lost a wild and careless expression of glee, animated at present, when he was exercising for his own pleasure the arts which he usually practised for bread,—all announced one of those peripatetic followers of Orpheus, whom the vulgar call a strolling fiddler. Gazing more attentively, I easily discovered that though the poor musician's eyes were open, their sense was shut, and that the ecstacy with which he turned them up to Heaven, only derived its apparent expression

from his own internal emotions, but received no assistance from the visible objects around. Beside him sat his female companion, in a man's hat, a blue coat, which seemed also to have been an article of male apparel, and a red petticoat. She was cleaner, in person and in clothes, than such itinerants generally are; and, having been in her day a strapping *bona roba*, she did not even yet neglect some attention to her appearance; wore a large amber necklace, and silver ear-rings, and had her plaid fastened across her breast with a brooch of the same metal.

The man also looked clean, notwithstanding the meanness of his attire, and had a decent silk handkerchief well knotted about his throat, under which peeped a clean owerlay. His beard, also, instead of displaying a grizzly stubble, unmowed for several days, flowed in thick and comely abundance over the breast, to the length of six inches, and mingled with his hair, which was but beginning to exhibit a touch of age. To sum up his appearance, the loose garment which I have described, was secured around him by a large old-fashioned belt, with brass

studs, in which hung a dirk, with a knife and fork, its usual accompaniments. Altogether, there was something more wild and adventurous-looking about the man, than I could have expected to see in an ordinary modern crowder; and the bow which he now and then drew across the violin, to direct his little choir, was decidedly that of no ordinary performer.

You must understand, that many of these observations were the fruits of after remark; for, I had scarce approached so near as to get a distinct view of the party, when my friend Benjie's lurching attendant, which he calls by the appropriate name of Hemp, began to cock his tail and ears, and, sensible of my presence, flew, barking like a fury, to the place where I had meant to lie concealed till I heard another song. I was obliged, however, to jump on my feet and intimidate Hemp, who would otherwise have bit me, by two sound kicks on the ribs, which sent him howling back to his master.

Little Benjie seemed somewhat dismayed at my appearance; but, calculating on my placability, and remembering, perhaps, that the ill-used

Solomon was no palfrey of mine, he speedily affected great glee, and almost in one breath assured the itinerants that I was "a grand gentleman, and had plenty of money, and was very kind to poor folk;" and informed me that this was "Willie Steenson—Wandering Willie—the best fiddler that ever kittled thairm with horse-hair."

The woman rose and curtsied; and Wandering Willie sanctioned his own praises with a nod, and the ejaculation, "All is true that the little boy says."

I asked him if he was of this country.

"*This* country!" replied the blind man—"I am of every country in broad Scotland, and a wee bit of England to the boot. But yet I am, in some sense, of this country; for I was born within hearing of the roar of Solway. Will I give your honour a touch of the auld bread-winner?"

He preluded as he spoke, in a manner which really excited my curiosity; and then taking the old tune of Galashiels for his theme, he graced it with a wildness of complicated and beautiful variations; during which, it was wonderful to observe how his sightless face was lighted up under

the conscious pride and heartfelt delight in the exercise of his own very considerable powers.

"What think you of that now, for three-score and twa?"

I expressed my surprise and pleasure.

"A rant, man—an auld rant," said Willie; "naething like the music ye hae in your ball-houses and your play-houses in Edinbro'; but it's weel aneugh anes in a way at a dike-side.—Here's another,—it's no a Scots tune, but it passes for ane—Oswald made it himsel, I reckon—he has cheated mony ane, but he canna cheat Wandering Willie."

He then played your favourite air of Roslin Castle, with a number of beautiful variations, some of which I am certain were almost extempore.

"You have another fiddle there, my friend," said I—"Have you a comrade?" But Willie's ears were deaf, or his attention was still busied with the tune.

The female replied in his stead, "O ay, sir—troth we have a partner—a gangrel body like our-

sells. No but my hinny might have been better, if he had liked; for mony a bein nook in mony a braw house has been offered to my hinny Willie, if he wad but just bide still and play to the gentles."

"Whisht, woman! whisht!" said the blind man, angrily, shaking his locks; "dinna deave the gentleman wi' your havers. Stay in a house and play to the gentles!—strike up when my leddy pleases, and lay down the bow when my lord bids! Na, na, that's nae life for Willie.—Look out, Maggie—peer out, woman, and see if ye can see Robin coming.—De'il be in him! he has got to the lea-side of some smuggler's punch-bowl, and he wunna budge the night, I doubt."

"That is your consort's instrument," said I—"Will you give me leave to try my skill?" I slipped at the same time a shilling into the woman's hand.

"I dinna ken whether I dare trust Robin's fiddle to ye," said Willie, bluntly. His wife gave him a twitch. "Hout awa, Maggie," he said, in contempt of the hint; "though the gentleman may hae gien ye siller, he may have nae

bow-hand for a' that, and I'll no trust Robin's fiddle wi' an ignoramus.—But that's no sae muckle amiss," he added, as I began to touch the instrument; "I am thinking ye have some skill of the craft."

To confirm him in this favourable opinion, I began to execute such a complicated flourish as I thought must have turned Crowdero into a pillar of stone with envy and wonder. I scaled the top of the finger-board, to dive at once to the bottom—skipped with flying fingers, like Timotheus, from shift to shift—struck arpeggios and harmonic tones, but without exciting any of the astonishment which I had expected.

Willie indeed listened to me with considerable attention; but I was no sooner finished, than he immediately mimicked on his own instrument the fantastic complication of tones which I had produced, and made so whimsical a parody of my performance, that, although somewhat angry, I could not help laughing heartily, in which I was joined by Benjie, whose reverence for me held him under no restraint; while the poor dame, fearful, doubtless, of my taking offence at this

familiarity, seemed divided betwixt her conjugal reverence for her Willie, and her desire to give him a hint for his guidance.

At length the old man stopped of his own accord, and, as if he had sufficiently rebuked me by his mimicry, he said, "But for a' that, ye will play very weel wi' a little practice and some gude teaching. But ye maun learn to put the heart into it, man—to put the heart into it."

I played an air in simpler taste, and received more decided approbation.

"That's something like it, man. Od, ye are a clever birkie!"

The woman touched his coat again. "The gentleman is a gentleman, Willie—ye maunna speak that gate to him, hinny."

"The deevil I maunna!" said Willie; "and what for maunna I?—If he was ten gentles, he canna draw a bow like me, can he?"

"Indeed I cannot, my honest friend," said I; "and if you will go with me to a house hard by, I would be glad to have a night with you."

Here I looked round, and observed Benjie smothering a laugh, which I was sure had mis-

chief in it. I seized him suddenly by the ear, and made him confess that he was laughing at the thoughts of the reception which a fiddler was likely to get from the Quakers at Mount Sharon. I chucked him from me, not sorry that his mirth had reminded me in time of what I had for the moment forgotten; and invited the itinerant to go with me to Shepherd's Bush, from which I proposed to send word to Mr Geddes that I should not return home that evening. But the minstrel declined this invitation also. He was engaged for the night, he said, to a dance in the neighbourhood, and vented a round execration on the laziness or drunkenness of his comrade, who had not appeared at the place of rendezvous.

"I will go with you instead of him," said I, in a sudden whim; "and I will give you a crown to introduce me as your comrade."

"*You* gang instead of Rob the Rambler! My certie, freend, ye are no blate," answered Wandering Willie, in a tone which announced death to my frolic.

But Maggie, whom the offer of the crown had not escaped, began to open on that scent with a

maundering sort of lecture. "O Willy! hinny Willie, whan will ye learn to be wise? There's a crown to be win for naething but saying ae man's name instead of anither. And, waes me! I hae just a shilling of this gentleman's gieing, and a bodle of my ain; and ye wunna bend your will sae muckle as to take up the siller that's flung at your feet! Ye will die the death of a cadger's powney in a wreath of drift! and what can I do better than lie doun and die wi' you? for ye winna let me keep either you or mysel leevin."

"Haud your nonsense tongue, woman," said Willie, but less absolutely than before. "Is he a real gentleman, or ane of the player men?"

"I'se uphaud him a real gentleman," said the woman.

"I'se uphaud ye ken little of the matter," said Willie; "let us see hand of your hand, neebor, gin ye like."

I gave him my hand. He said to himself, "Ay, ay, here are fingers that have seen canny service." Then running his hand over my hair, my face, and my dress, he went on with his soli-

loquy; "Ay, ay, muisted hair, braid-claith o' the best, and seenteen hundred linen on his back, at the least of it.—And how do you think, my braw birkie, that ye are to pass for a tramping fiddler?"

"My dress is plain," said I,—indeed I had chosen my most ordinary suit, out of compliment to my Quaker friends,—"and I can easily pass for a young farmer out upon a frolic. Come, I will double the crown I promised you."

"Damn your crowns!" said the disinterested man of music. "I would like to have a round wi' you, that's certain;—but a farmer, and with a hand that never held pleugh-stilt or pettle, that will never do. Ye may pass for a trades-lad from Dumfries, or a student upon the ramble, or the like o' that.—But hark ye, lad; if ye expect to be ranting amang the queans o' lasses where ye are gaun, ye will come by the waur, I can tell ye; for the fishers are wild chaps, and will bide nae taunts."

I promised to be civil and cautious; and, to smooth the good woman, I slipped the promised

piece into her hand. The acute organs of the blind man detected this little manœuvre.

"Are ye at it again wi' the siller, ye jadd? I'll be sworn ye wad rather hear ae twalpenny clink against another, than have a spring from Rory Dall, if he was coming alive again anes errand. Gang doun the gate to Lucky Gregson's and get the things ye want, and bide there till ele'en hours the morn; and if ye see Robin send him on to me."

"Am I no gaun to the ploy, then?" said Maggie, in a disappointed tone.

"And what for should ye?" said her lord and master; "to dance a' night, I'se warrant, and no to be fit to walk your tae's-length the morn, and we have ten Scots miles afore us? Na, na. Stable the steed, and pit your wife to bed, when there's night wark to do."

"Aweel, aweel, Willie hinnie, ye ken best; but O, take an unco care o' yoursell, and mind ye hae nae the blessing o' sight."

"Your tongue gars me whiles tire of the blessing of hearing, woman," replied Willie, in answer to this tender exhortation.

But I now put in for my interest. "Hallo, good folks, remember that I am to send the boy to Mount Sharon, and if you go to the Shepherd's Bush, honest woman, how the deuce am I to guide the blind man where he is going? I know little or nothing of the country."

"And ye ken mickle less of my hinnie, sir," replied Maggie, "that think he needs ony guiding; he's the best guide himsell, that ye'll find between Criffell and Carlisle. Horse-road and foot-path, parish-road and kirk-road, high-road and cross-road, he kens ilka foot of ground in Nithsdale."

"Ay, ye might have said in braid Scotland, gudewife," added the fiddler. "But gang your ways, Maggie, that's the first wise word ye hae spoke the day. I wish it was dark night, and rain, and wind, for the gentleman's sake, that I might shew him there is whiles when ane had better want een than have them; for I am as true a guide by darkness as by day-light."

Internally as well pleased that my companion was not put to give me this last proof of his skill, I wrote a note with a pencil, desiring Samuel to

bring my horses at midnight, when I thought my frolic would be well nigh over, to the place to which the bearer should direct him, and I sent little Benjie with an apology to the worthy Quakers.

As we parted in different directions, the good woman said, " Oh, sir, if ye wad but ask Willie to tell ye ane of his tales to shorten the gate! He can speak like ony minister frae the pu'pit, and he might have been a minister himsell, but——"

" Haud your tongue, ye fule!—But stay, Meg—gie me a kiss, we maunna part in anger, neither."—And thus our society separated.

LETTER XI.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

You are now to conceive us proceeding in our different directions across the bare downs. Yonder flies little Benjie to the northward, with Hemp scampering at his heels, both running as if for dear life, so long as the rogue is within sight of his employer, and certain to take the walk very easy so soon as he is out of ken. Stepping westward, you see Maggie's tall form and high-crowned hat, relieved by the fluttering of her plaid upon the left shoulder, darkening as the distance diminishes her size, and as the level sunbeams begin to sink upon the sea. She is taking her quiet journey to the Shepherd's Bush.

Then, stoutly striding over the lea, you have a full view of Darsie Latimer, with his new ac-

quaintance, Wandering Willie, who, bating that he touched the ground now and then with his staff, not in a doubtful or groping manner, but with the confident air of an experienced pilot, heaving the lead when he has the soundings by heart, walks as firmly and boldly as if he possessed the eyes of Argus. There they go, each with his violin slung at his back, but one of them at least totally ignorant whither their course is directed.

And wherefore did you enter so keenly into such a mad frolic? says my wise counsellor—Why, I think upon the whole, that as a sense of loneliness, and a longing for that kindness which is interchanged in society, led me to take up my temporary residence at Mount Sharon, the monotony of my life there, the quiet simplicity of the conversation of the Geddesses, and the uniformity of their amusements and employments, wearied out my impatient temper, and prepared me for the first escapade which chance might throw in my way.

What would I have given that I could have procured that solemn grave visage of thine, to dignify this joke, as it has done full many a one of

thine own! Thou hast so happy a knack of doing the most foolish things in the wisest manner, that thou might'st pass thy extravagancies for rational actions, even in the eyes of Prudence herself.

From the direction which my guide observed, I began to suspect that the dell at Brokenburn was our probable destination; and it became important to me to consider whether I could, with propriety, or even perfect safety, intrude myself again upon the hospitality of my former host. I therefore asked Willie, whether we were bound for the Laird's, as folks called him.

"Do you ken the Laird?" said Willie, interrupting an overture of Corelli, of which he had whistled several bars with great precision.

"I know the Laird a little," said I; "and therefore, I was doubting whether I ought to go to his town in disguise."

"And I should doubt, not a little only, but a great deal, before I took ye there, my chap," said Wandering Willie; "for I am thinking it wad be worth little less than broken banes baith to you and me. Na, na, chap, we are no ganging to the Laird's, but to a blithe birling at the

Brokenburn-foot, where there will be mony a braw lad and lass; and maybe there may be some of the Laird's folks, for he never comes to sic splores himself. He is all for fowling-piece and salmon-spear, now that pike and musket are out of the question."

"He has been a soldier, then?" said I.

"I'se warrant him a soger," answered Willie; "but take my advice, and speer as little about him as he does about you. Best to let sleeping dogs lie. Better say naething about the Laird, my man, and tell me instead, what sort of a chap ye are, that are sae ready to cleik in with an auld gaberlunzie fiddler? Maggie says ye're gentle, but a shilling maks a' the difference that Maggie kens, between a gentle and a simple, and your crowns wad mak ye a prince of the blood in her een. But I am ane that ken full weel that ye may wear good claithes, and have a soft hand, and yet that may come of idleness as weel as gentrice."

I told him my name, with the same addition I had formerly given to Mr Joshua Geddes; that I was a law-student, tired of my studies, and rambling about for exercise and amusement.

"And are ye in the wont of drawing up wi' all the gangrel bodies that ye meet on the high road, or find cowering in a sand-bunker upon the links?" demanded Willie.

"Oh no; only with honest folks like yourself, Willie," was my reply.

"Honest folks like me!—How do ye ken whether I am honest, or what I am?—I may be the deevil himsell for what ye ken; for he has power to come disguised like an angel of light; and besides, he is a prime fiddler—He played a sonata to Corelli ye ken."

There was something odd in this speech, and the tone in which it was said. It seemed as if my companion was not always in his constant mind, or that he was willing to try if he could affright me. I laughed at the extravagance of his language, however, and asked him in reply, if he was fool enough to believe that the foul fiend would play so silly a masquerade.

"Ye ken little about it—little about it," said the old man, shaking his head and beard, and knitting his brows—"I could tell ye something about that."

What his wife mentioned of his being a tale-teller, as well as a musician, now occurred to me; and as you know I like tales of superstition, I begged to have a specimen of his talent as we went along.

"It is very true," said the blind man, "that when I am tired of scraping thairm or singing ballants, I whiles make a tale serve the turn amang the country bodies; and I have some fearsome anes, that make the auld carlines shake on the settle, and the bits o' bairns skirl on their minnies out frae their beds. But this that I am gaun to tell you was a thing that befell in our ain house in my father's time—that is, my father was then a haflins callant; and I tell it to you, that it may be a lesson to you, that are but a young, thoughtless chap, wha ye draw up wi' on a lonely road; for muckle was the dool and care that came o't to my gudesire."

He commenced his tale accordingly, in a distinct narrative tone of voice, which he raised and depressed with considerable skill; at times sinking almost into a whisper, and turning his clear but sightless eye-balls upon my face, as if it had been

possible for him to witness the impression which his narrative made upon my features. I will not spare you a syllable of it, although it be of the longest; so I make a dash——and begin

Wandering Willie's Tale.

Ye maun have heard of Sir Robert Redgauntlet of that Ilk, who lived in these parts before the dear years. The country will lang mind him; and our fathers used to draw breath thick if ever they heard him named. He was out wi' the Hielandmen in Montrose's time; and again he was in the hills wi' Glencairn in the saxteen hundred and fifty-twa; and sae when King Charles the Second came in, wha was in sic favour as the Laird of Redgauntlet? He was knighted at Lonon court, wi' the King's ain sword; and being a red-hot prelatist, he came down here, rampauging like a lion, with commissions of lieutenancy, and of lunacy for what I ken, to put down a' the Whigs and Covenanters in the country. Wild wark they

made of it; for the Whigs were as dour as the Cavaliers were fierce, and it was which should first tire the other. Redgauntlet was aye for the strong-hand; and his name is kenn'd as wide in the country as Claverhouse's or Tam Dalyell's. Glen, nor dargle, nor mountain, nor cave, could hide the puir hill-folk when Redgauntlet was out with bugle and bloodhound after them, as if they had been sae mony deer. And troth when they fand them, they didna mak muckle mair ceremony than a Hielandman wi' a roe-buck—It was just, "Will ye tak the test?"—if not, "Make ready—present—fire!"—and there lay the recusant.

Far and wide was Sir Robert hated and feared. Men thought he had a direct compact with Satan—that he was proof against steel—and that bullets happed aff his buff-coat like hail-stanes from a hearth—that he had a mear that would turn a hare on the side of Carrifra-gawns—and muckle to the same purpose, of whilk mair anon. The best blessing they wared on him was, "De'il scowp wi' Redgauntlet!" He wasna a bad master to his ain folk though, and was weel aneugh liked by his tenants; and as for the lackies and

troopers that raid out wi' him to the persecutions, as the Whigs ca'ad these killing times, they wad hae drunken themsels blind to his health at ony time.

Now ye are to ken that my gudesire lived on Redgauntlet's grund—they ca' the place Primrose-Knowe. We had lived on the grund, and under the Redgauntlets, since the riding days, and lang before. It was a pleasant bit; and I think the air is callerer and fresher there than onywhere else in the country. It's a' deserted now; and I sat on the broken door-cheek three days since, and was glad I couldna see the plight the place was in; but that's a' wide o' the mark. There dwelt my gudesire, Steenie Steenson, a rambling, rattling chiel' he had been in his young days, and could play weel on the pipes; he was famous at "Hoopers and Girders"—a' Cumberland couldna touch him at "Jockie Lattin"—and he had the finest finger for the back-lill between Berwick and Carlisle. The like o' Steenie wasna the sort that they made Whigs o'. And so he became a Tory, as they ca' it, which we now ca' Jacobites, just out of a kind of needcessity, that he

might belang to some side or other. He had nae ill-will to the Whig bodies, and likedna to see the blude rin, though, being obliged to follow Sir Robert in hunting and hosting, watching and warding, he saw muckle mischief, and maybe did some, that he couldna avoid.

Now Steenie was a kind of favourite with his master, and kenn'd a' the folks about the castle, and was often sent for to play the pipes when they were at their merriment. Auld Dougal MacCallum, the butler, that had followed Sir Robert through gude and ill, thick and thin, pool and stream, was specially fond of the pipes, and aye gae my gudesire his gude word wi' the Laird; for Dougal could turn his master round his finger.

Weel, round came the Revolution, and it had like to have broken the hearts baith of Dougal and his master. But the change was not a'thegether sae great as they feared, and other folk thought for. The Whigs made an unca crawing what they wad do with their auld enemies, and in special wi' Sir Robert Redgauntlet. But there were ower mony great folks dipped in the

same doings, to make a spick and span new warld. So Parliament passed it a' ower easy; and Sir Robert, bating that he was held to hunting foxes instead of Covenanters, remained just the man he was. His revel was as loud, and his hall as weel lighted, as ever it had been, though maybe he lacked the fines of the non-conformists, that used to come to stock larder and cellar; for it is certain he began to be keener about the rents than his tenants used to find him before, and they behoved to be prompt to the rent-day, or else the Laird wasna pleased. And he was sic an awsome body, that naebody cared to anger him; for the oaths he swore, and the rage that he used to get into, and the looks that he put on, made men sometimes think him a deevil incarnate.

Weel, my gudesire was nae manager—no that he was a very great misguider—but he hadna the saving gift, and he got twa terms rent in arrear. He got the first brash at Whitsunday put ower wi' fair words and piping; but when Martinmas came, there was a summons from the grund-officer to come wi' the rent on a day preceese, or else Steenie behoved to flitt. Sair wark he had

to get the siller; but he was weel-freended, and at last he got the haill scraped thegether—a thousand merks—the maist of it was from a neighbour they ca'd Laurie Lapraik—a sly tod. Laurie had walth o' gear—could hunt wi' the hound and rin wi' the hare—and be Whig or Tory, saunt or sinner, as the wind stood. He was a professor in this Revolution warld, but he liked an orra sound and a tune on the pipes weel aneugh at a bye-time; and abune a', he thought he had gude security for the siller he lent my gudesire over the stocking at Primrose-Knowe.

Away trots my gudesire to Redgauntlet Castle wi' a heavy purse and a light heart, glad to be out of the Laird's danger. Weel, the first thing he learned at the Castle was, that Sir Robert had fretted himsell into a fit of the gout, because he did not appear before twelve o'clock. It wasna a'-thegether for sake of the money, Dougal thought; but because he didna like to part wi' my gudesire aff the grund. Dougal was glad to see Steenie, and brought him into the great oak parlour, and there sat the Laird his leesome lane, excepting that he had beside him a great, ill-favoured

jack-an-ape, that was a special pet of his; a cankered beast it was, and mony an ill-natured trick it played—ill to please it was, and easily angered—ran about the haill castle, chattering and yowling, and pinching, and biting folk, specially before ill-weather, or disturbances in the state. Sir Robert ca'ad it Major Weir, after the warlock that was burned; and few folk liked either the name or the conditions of the creature—they thought there was something in it by ordinar—and my gudesire was not just easy in mind when the door shut on him, and he saw himself in the room wi' naebody but the Laird, Dougal MacAllum, and the Major, a thing that hadna chanced to him before.

Sir Robert sat, or, I should say, lay, in a great armed chair, wi' his grand velvet gown, and his feet on a cradle; for he had baith gout and gravel, and his face looked as gash and ghastly as Satan's. Major Weir sat opposite to him, in a red-laced coat, and the Laird's wig on his head; and aye as Sir Robert girned wi' pain, the jack-an-ape girned too, like a sheep's-head between a pair of tangs—an ill-faur'd, fearsome couple they were. The Laird's buff-coat was hung on a pin

behind him, and his broadsword and his pistols within reach; for he keepit up the auld fashion of having the weapons ready, and a horse saddled day and night, just as he used to do when he was able to loup on horseback, and away after ony of the hill-folk he could get speerings of. Some said it was for fear of the Whigs taking vengeance, but I judge it was just his auld custom —he wasna gien to fear onything. The rental-book, wi' its black cover and brass clasps, was lying beside him; and a book of sculduddry sangs was put betwixt the leaves, to keep it open at the place where it bore evidence against the Goodman of Primrose-Knowe, as behind the hand with his mails and duties. Sir Robert gave my gudesire a look, as if he wad have withered his heart in his bosom. Ye maun ken he had a way of bending his brows, that men saw the visible mark of a horse-shoe in his forehead, deep-dinted, as if it had been stamped there.

"Are ye come light-handed, ye son of a toom whistle?" said Sir Robert. "Zounds! if you are——"

My gudesire, with as gude a countenance as

he could put on, made a leg, and placed the bag of money on the table wi' a dash, like a man that does something clever. The Laird drew it to him hastily—"Is it all here, Steenie, man?"

"Your honour will find it right," said my gudesire.

"Here, Dougal," said the Laird, "gie Steenie a tass of brandy down stairs, till I count the siller and write the receipt."

But they werena weel out of the room, when Sir Robert gied a yelloch that garr'd the castle rock. Back ran Dougal—in flew the livery-men—yell on yell gied the Laird, ilk ane mair awfu' than the ither. My gudesire knew not whether to stand or flee, but he ventured back into the parlour, where a' was gaun hirdy-girdie—naebody to say 'come in' or 'gae out.' Terribly the Laird roared for cauld water to his feet, and wine to cool his throat; and, Hell, hell, hell, and its flames, was aye the word in his mouth. They brought him water, and when they plunged his swoln feet into the tub, he cried out it was burning; and folk say that it *did* bubble and sparkle like a seething cauldron. He flung the cup at

Dougal's head, and said he had given him blood instead of burgundy; and, sure aneugh, the lass washed clottered blood aff the carpet the neist day. The jack-an-ape they ca'd Major Weir, it jibbered and cried as if it was mocking its master; my gudesire's head was like to turn —he forgot baith siller and receipt, and down stairs he banged; but as he ran, the shrieks came faint and fainter; there was a deep-drawn shivering groan, and word gaed through the Castle, that the Laird was dead.

Weel, away came my gudesire, wi' his finger in his mouth, and his best hope was, that Dougal had seen the money-bag, and heard the Laird speak of writing the receipt. The young Laird, now Sir John, came from Edinburgh, to see things put to rights. Sir John and his father never gree'd weel—he had been bred an advocate, and afterwards sat in the last Scots Parliament and voted for the Union, having gotten, it was thought, a rug of the compensations—if his father could have come out of his grave, he would have brained him for it on his awn hearth-stane. Some thought it was easier counting with the

auld rough Knight than the fair-spoken young ane—but mair of that anon. e ga-

Dougal MacCallum, poor body, neither and nor graned, but gaed about the house lookin like a corpse, but directing, as was his duty, a the order of the grand funeral. Now, Douga looked aye waur and waur when night was com ing, and was aye the last to gang to his bed whilk was in a little round just opposite the chamber of dais, whilk his master occupied while he was living, and where he now lay in state as they ca'ad it, well-a-day! The night before the funeral, Dougal could keep his awn counsel nae langer; he came doun with his proud spirit, and fairly asked auld Hutcheon to sit in his room with him for an hour. When they were in the round, Dougal took ae tass of brandy to himsel, and gave another to Hutcheon, and wished him all health and lang life, and said that, for himsel, he wasna lang for this world; for that, every night since Sir Robert's death, his silver call had sounded from the state chamber, just as it used to do at nights in his lifetime, to call Dougal to help to turn him in his bed. Dougal said, that being alone with the dead on that floor

Doug tower, (for naebody cared to wake Sir Ro-
instead Redgauntlet like another corpse,) he had
lass daured to answer the call, but that now his
conscience checked him for neglecting his duty ;
for, " though death breaks service," said Mac-
Callum, " it shall never break my service to Sir
Robert ; and I will answer his next whistle, so be
you will stand by me, Hutcheon."

Hutcheon had nae will to the wark, but he had stood by Dougal in battle and broil, and he wad not fail him at this pinch ; so down the carles sat over a stoup of brandy, and Hutcheon, who was something of a clerk, would have read a chapter of the Bible ; but Dougal would hear naething but a blaud of Davie Lindsay, whilk was the waur preparation.

When midnight came, and the house was quiet as the grave, sure aneugh the silver whistle sounded as sharp and shrill as if Sir Robert was blowing it, and up got the twa auld serving-men, and tottered into the room where the dead man lay. Hutcheon saw aneugh at the first glance ; for there were torches in the room, which shewed him the foul fiend, in his ain shape, sitting on the Laird's coffin ! Over he cowped as

bert h ...een dead. He could not tell how lang never ...n a trance at the door, but when he ga-c... ...ed himself, he cried on his neighbour, and ...ng no answer, raised the house, when Dou-... was found lying dead within twa steps of ...ed where his master's coffin was placed. As ... the whistle, it was gaen anes and aye; but ...ny a time was it heard on the top of the house ...n the bartizan, and amang the auld chimnies and turrets, where the howlets have their nests. Sir John hushed the matter up, and the funeral passed over without mair bogle-wark.

But when a' was over, and the Laird was beginning to settle his affairs, every tenant was called up for his arrears, and my gudesire for the full sum that stood against him in the rental-book. Weel, away he trots to the Castle, to tell his story, and there he is introduced to Sir John, sitting in his father's chair, in deep mourning, with weepers and hanging cravat, and a small walking rapier by his side, instead of the auld broad-sword that had a hundred-weight of steel about it, what with blade, chape, and basket-hilt. I have heard their communing so often tauld

ower, that I almost think I was there mysell, though I couldna be born at the time. (In fact, Alan, my companion mimicked, with a good deal of humour, the flattering, conciliating tone of the tenant's address, and the hypocritical melancholy of the Laird's reply. His grandfather, he said, had, while he spoke, his eye fixed on the rental-book, as if it were a mastiff-dog that he was afraid would spring up and bite him.)

"I wuss ye joy, sir, of the head-seat, and the white loaf, and the braid lairdship. Your father was a kind man to friends and followers; muckle grace to you, Sir John, to fill his shoon—his boots, I suld say, for he seldom wore shoon, unless it were muils when he had the gout."

"Ay, Steenie," quoth the Laird, sighing deeply, and putting his napkin to his een, "his was a sudden call, and he will be missed in the country; no time to set his house in order—weel prepared God-ward, no doubt, which is the root of the matter—but left us behind a tangled hesp to wind, Steenie.—Hem! hem! We maun go to business, Steenie; much to do, and little time to do it in."

Here he opened the fatal volume; I have heard of a thing they call Doomsday-book—I am clear it has been a rental of back-ganging tenants.

"Stephen," said Sir John, still in the same soft, sleekit tone of voice—"Stephen Stevenson, or Steenson, ye are down here for a year's rent behind the hand—due at last term."

Stephen. "Please your honour, Sir John, I paid it to your father."

Sir John. "Ye took a receipt then, doubtless, Stephen; and can produce it?"

Stephen. "Indeed I hadna time, an it like your honour; for nae sooner had I set doun the siller, and just as his honour Sir Robert, that's gaen, drew it till him to count it, and write out the receipt, he was ta'en wi' the pains that removed him."

"That was unlucky," said Sir John, after a pause. "But ye maybe paid it in the presence of somebody. I want but a *talis qualis* evidence, Stephen. I would go ower strictly to work with no poor man."

Stephen. "Troth, Sir John, there was naebody in the room but Dougal MacCallum the

butler. But, as your honour kens, he has e'en followed his auld master."

"Very unlucky again, Stephen," said Sir John, without altering his voice a single note. "The man to whom ye paid the money is dead —and the man who witnessed the payment is dead too—and the siller, which should have been to the fore, is neither seen nor heard tell of in the repositories. How am I to believe a' this?"

Stephen. "I dinna ken, your honour; but there is a bit memorandum note of the very coins; for, God help me! I had to borrow out of twenty purses; and I am sure that ilk man there set down will take his grit oath for what purpose I borrowed the money."

Sir John. "I have little doubt ye *borrowed* the money, Steenie. It is the *payment* that I want to have some proof of."

Stephen. "The siller maun be about the house, Sir John. And since your honour never got it, and his honour that was canna have taen it wi' him, maybe some of the family may have seen it."

Sir John. "We will examine the servants, Stephen; that is but reasonable."

But lackey and lass, and page and groom, all denied stoutly that they had ever seen such a bag of money as my gudesire described. What was waur, he had unluckily not mentioned to any living soul of them his purpose of paying his rent. Ae quean had noticed something under his arm, but she took it for the pipes.

Sir John Redgauntlet ordered the servants out of the room, and then said to my gudesire, "Now, Steenie, ye see you have fair play; and, as I have little doubt ye ken better where to find the siller than ony other body, I beg, in fair terms, and for your own sake, that you will end this fasherie; for, Stephen, ye maun pay or flitt."

"The Lord forgie your opinion," said Stephen, driven almost to his wits' end—"I am an honest man."

"So am I, Stephen," said his honour; "and so are all the folks in the house, I hope. But if there be a knave amongst us, it must be he that tells the story he cannot prove." He paused, and then added, mair sternly, "If I understand your trick, sir, you want to take advan-

tage of some malicious reports concerning things in this family, and particularly respecting my father's sudden death, thereby to cheat me out of the money, and perhaps take away my character, by insinuating that I have received the rent I am demanding.—Where do you suppose this money to be?—I insist upon knowing."

My gudesire saw everything look so muckle against him, that he grew nearly desperate—however, he shifted from one foot to another, looked to every corner of the room, and made no answer.

"Speak out, sirrah," said the Laird, assuming a look of his father's, a very particular ane, which he had when he was angry—it seemed as if the wrinkless of his frown made that self-same fearful shape of a horse's shoe in the middle of his brow;—"Speak out, sir! I *will* know your thoughts;—do you suppose that I have this money?"

"Far be it frae me to say so," said Stephen.

"Do you charge any of my people with having taken it?"

"I wad be laith to charge them that may be

innocent," said my gudesire; "and if there be any one that is guilty, I have nae proof."

"Somewhere the money must be, if there is a word of truth in your story," said Sir John; "I ask where you think it is—and demand a correct answer?"

"In hell, if you will have my thoughts of it," said my gudesire, driven to extremity,—"in hell! with your father and his silver whistle."

Down the 'stairs he ran, (for the parlour was nae place for him after such a word,) and he heard the Laird swearing blood and wounds behind him, as fast as ever did Sir Robert, and roaring for the baillie and the baron-officer.

Away rode my gudesire to his chief creditor, (him they ca'd Laurie Lapraik,) to try if he could make onything out of him; but when he tauld his story, he got but the warst word in his wame—thief, beggar, and dyvour, were the saftest terms; and to the boot of these hard terms, Lawrie brought up the auld story of his dipping his hand in the blood of God's saints, just as if a tenant could have helped riding with the Laird, and that a laird like Sir Robert Redgauntlet. My

gudesire was, by this time, far beyond the bounds of patience, and, while he and Laurie were at de'il speed the liars, he was wanchancie aneugh to abuse his doctrine as weel as the man, and said things that gar'd folks flesh grew that heard them; —he wasna just himsell, and he had lived wi' a wild set in his day.

At last they parted, and my gudesire was to ride hame through the wood of Pitmarkie, that is a' fou of black firs, as they say.—I ken the wood, but the firs may be black or white for what I can tell.—At the entry of the wood there is a wild common, and on the edge of the common, a little lonely change-house, that was keepit then by an ostler-wife, they suld hae ca'd her Tibbie Faw, and there puir Steenie cried for a mutchkin of brandy, for he had had no refreshment the hail day. Tibbie was earnest wi' him to take a bite of meat, but he couldna think o't, nor would he take his foot out of the stirrup, and took off the brandy wholely at twa draughts, and named a toast at each:—the first was, the memory of Sir Robert Redgauntlet, and might he never lie quiet in his grave till he had righted his poor bond-

tenant; and the second was, a health to Man's Enemy, if he would but get him back the pock of siller, or tell him what came o't, for he saw the hail world was like to regard him as a thief and a cheat, and he took that waur than even the ruin of his house and hauld.

On he rode, little caring where. It was a dark night turned, and the trees made it yet darker, and he let the beast take its ain road through the wood; when, all of a sudden, from tired and wearied that it was before, the nag began to spring, and flee, and stend, that my gudesire could hardly keep the saddle—Upon the whilk, a horseman, suddenly riding up beside him, said, "That's a mettle beast of yours, freend; will you sell him?"—So saying, he touched the horse's neck with his riding-wand, and it fell into its auld heigh-ho of a stumbling trot; "But his spunk's soon out of him, I think," continued the stranger, "and that is like mony a man's courage, that thinks he wad do great things till he come to the proof."

My gudesire scarce listened to this, but spurred his horse, with "Gude e'en to you, freend."

But it's like the stranger was ane that does na lightly yield his point; for, ride as Steenie liked, he was aye beside him at the self-same pace. At last my gudesire, Steenie Steenson, grew half angry; and, to say the truth, half feared.

"What is it that ye want with me, freend?" he said. "If ye be a robber, I have nae money; if ye be a leal man, wanting company, I have nae heart to mirth or speaking; and if ye want to ken the road, I scarce ken it mysell."

"If you will tell me your grief," said the stranger, "I am one that, though I have been sair miscaad in the world, am the only hand for helping my friends."

So my gudesire, to ease his ain heart, mair than from any hope of help, told him the story from beginning to end.

"It's a hard pinch," said the stranger; "but I think I can help you."

"If you could lend the money, sir, and take a lang day—I ken nae other help on earth," said my gudesire.

"But there may be some under the earth," said the stranger. "Come, I'll be frank wi' you;

I could lend you the money on bond, but you would maybe scruple my terms. Now, I can tell you, that your auld Laird is disturbed in his grave by your curses, and the wailing of your family, and—if ye daur venture to go to see him, he will give you the receipt."

My gudesire's hair stood on end at this proposal, but he thought his companion might be some humoursome chield that was trying to frighten him, and might end with lending him the money. Besides, he was bauld wi' brandy, and desperate wi' distress; and he said, he had courage to go to the gate of hell, and a step farther, for that receipt.—The stranger laughed.

'Weel, they rode on through the thickest of the wood, when, all of a sudden, the horse stopped at the door of a great house; and, but that he knew the place was ten miles off, my father would have thought he was at Redgauntlet Castle. They rode into the outer court-yard, through the muckle faulding yetts, and aneath the auld portcullis; and the whole front of the house was lighted, and there were pipes and fiddles, and as much dancing and deray within as used to be

in Sir Robert's house at Pace and Yule, and such high seasons. They lap off, and my gudesire, as seemed to him, fastened his horse to the very ring he had tied him to that morning, when he gaed to wait on the young Sir John.

"God!" said my father, "if Sir Robert's death be but a dream!"

He knocked at the ha' door, just as he wont, and his auld acquaintance, Dougal MacCallum, just after his wont, too,—came to open the door, and said, "Piper Steenie, are ye there, lad? Sir Robert has been crying for you."

My gudesire was like a man in a dream—he looked for the stranger, but he was gaen for the time. At last, he just tried to say, "Ha! Dougal Driveower, are ye living? I thought ye had been dead."

"Never fash yoursell wi' me," said Dougal, "but look to yoursell; and see ye tak naething frae onybody here, neither meat, drink, or siller, except just the receipt that is your ain."

So saying, he led the way out through halls and trances that were weel kenn'd to my gudesire, and into the auld oak parlour; and there was as

much singing of profane sangs, and birling of red wine, and speaking blasphemy and sculduddry, as had ever been in Redgauntlet Castle when it was at the blythest.

But, Lord take us in keeping ! what a set of ghastly revellers they were that sat round that table !—My gudesire kenn'd mony that had long before gane to their place. There was the fierce Middleton, and the dissolute Rothes, and the crafty Lauderdale ; and Dalyell, with his bald head and a beard to his girdle ; and Earlshall, with Cameron's blude on his hand ; and wild Bonshaw, that tied blessed Mr Cargill's limbs till the blude sprung ; and Dumbarton Douglas, the twice-turned traitor baith to country and king. There was the Bluidy Advocate MacKenyie, who, for his worldly wit and wisdom, had been to the rest as a god. And there was Claverhouse, as beautiful as when he lived, with his long, dark, curled locks, streaming down to his laced buff-coat, and his left hand always on his right spule-blade, to hide the wound that the silver bullet had made. He sat apart from them all, and looked at them with a melancholy, haughty countenance ; while

the rest hallooed, and sung, and laughed, that the room rang. But their smiles were fearfully contorted from time to time; and their laughter passed into such wild sounds, as made my gudesire's very nails grow blue, and chilled the marrow in his banes.

They that waited at the table were just the wicked serving-men and troopers, that had done their work and wicked bidding on earth. There was the Lang Lad of the Nethertown, that helped to take Argyle; and the Bishop's summoner, that they called the De'il's Rattle-bag; and the wicked guardsmen, in their laced coats; and the savage Highland Amorites, that shed blood like water; and many a proud serving-man, haughty of heart and bloody of hand, cringing to the rich, and making them wickeder than they would be; grinding the poor to powder, when the rich had broken them to fragments. And mony, mony mair were coming and ganging, a' as busy in their vocation as if they had been alive.

Sir Robert Redgauntlet, in the midst of a' this fearful riot, cried, wi' a voice like thunder, on Steenie Piper, to come to the board-head where he

was sitting; his legs stretched out before him, and swathed up with flannel, with his holster pistols aside him, and the great broad-sword rested against his chair, just as my gudesire had seen him the last time upon earth—the very cushion for the jack-an-ape was close to him, but the creature itsell was not there—it wasna its hour, it's likely; for he heard them say as he came forward, "Is not the Major come yet?" And another answered, "The jack-an-ape will be here betimes the morn." And when my gudesire came forward, Sir Robert, or his ghaist, or the deevil in his likeness, said, "Weel, piper, hae ye settled wi' my son for the year's rent?"

With much ado my father gat breath to say, that Sir John would not settle without his honour's receipt.

"Ye shall hae that for a tune of the pipes, Steenie," said the appearance of Sir Robert—"Play us up 'Weel hoddled, Luckie.'"

Now this was a tune my gudesire learned frae a warlock, that heard it when they were worshipping Satan at their meetings; and my gudesire

had sometimes played it at the ranting suppers in Redgauntlet Castle, but never very willingly; and now he grew cauld at the very name of it, and said, for excuse, he hadna his pipes wi' him.

"MacCallum, ye limb of Beelzebub," said the fearfu' Sir Robert, "bring Steenie the pipes that I am keeping for him!"

MacCallum brought a pair of pipes might have served the piper of Donald of the Isles. But he gave my gudesire a nudge as he offered them; and looking secretly and closely, Steenie saw that the chanter was of steel, and heated to a white heat; so he had fair warning not to trust his fingers with it. So he excused himself again, and said, he was faint and frightened, and had not wind aneugh to fill the bag.

"Then ye maun eat and drink, Steenie," said the figure; "for we do little else here; and it's ill speaking between a fou man and a fasting."

Now these were the very words that the bloody Earl of Douglas said to keep the King's messenger in hand, while he cut the head off MacLellan of Bombie, at the Threave Castle; and that

put Steenie mair and mair on his guard. So he spoke up like a man, and said he came neither to eat, or drink, or make minstrelsy; but simply for his ain—to ken what was come o' the money he had paid, and to get a discharge for it; and he was so stout-hearted by this time, that he charged Sir Robert for conscience-sake—(he had no power to say the holy name)—and as he hoped for peace and rest, to spread no snares for him, but just to give him his ain.

The appearance gnashed its teeth and laughed, but it took from a large pocket-book the receipt, and handed it to Steenie. "Here is your receipt, ye pitiful cur; and for the money, my dog-whelp of a son may go look for it in the Cat's Cradle."

My gudesire uttered mony thanks, and was about to retire, when Sir Robert roared aloud, "Stop though, thou sack-doudling son of a whore! I am not done with thee. HERE we do nothing for nothing; and you must return on this very day twelvemonth, to pay your master the homage that you owe me for my protection."

My father's tongue was loosed of a suddenty,

and he said aloud, "I refer mysell to God's pleasure, and not to yours."

He had no sooner uttered the word than all was dark around him; and he sunk on the earth with such a sudden shock, that he lost both breath and sense.

How lang Steenie lay there, he could not tell; but when he came to himsell, he was lying in the auld kirkyard of Redgauntlet parishine, just at the door of the family aisle, and the scutcheon of the auld knight, Sir Robert, hanging over his head. There was a deep morning fog on grass and gravestone around him, and his horse was feeding quietly beside the minister's twa cows. Steenie would have thought the whole was a dream, but he had the receipt in his hand, fairly written and signed by the auld Laird; only the last letters of his name were a little disorderly, written like one seized with sudden pain.

Sorely troubled in his mind, he left that dreary place, rode through the mist to Redgauntlet Castle, and with much ado he got speech of the Laird. "Well, you dyvour bankrupt," was the rst word, "have you brought me my rent?"

"No," answered my gudesire, "I have not; but I have brought your honour Sir Robert's receipt for it."

"How, sirrah?—Sir Robert's receipt!—You told me he had not given you one."

"Will your honour please to see if that bit line is right?"

Sir John looked at every line, and at every letter, with much attention; and at last, at the date, which my gudesire had not observed,—"*From my appointed place*," he read, "*this twenty-fifth of November*."—"What!—That is yesterday!—Villain, thou must have gone to hell for this!"

"I got it from your honour's father—whether he be in heaven or hell, I know not," said Steenie.

"I will delate you for a warlock to the Privy Council!" said Sir John. "I will send you to your master, the devil, with the help of a tar-barrel and a torch!"

"I intend to delate mysell to the Presbytery," said Steenie, "and tell them all I have seen last night, whilk are things fitter for them to judge of than a borrel man like me."

Sir John paused, composed himsell, and desi-

red to hear the full history ; and my gudesire told it him from point to point, as I have told it you —word for word, neither more nor less.

Sir John was silent again for a long time, and at last he said, very composedly, "Steenie, this story of yours concerns the honour of many a noble family besides mine ; and if it be a leasing-making, to keep yourself out of my danger, the least you can expect is to have a red-hot iron driven through your tongue, and that will be as bad as scauding your fingers wi' a red-hot chanter. But yet it may be true, Steenie ; and if the money cast up, I will not know what to think of it.—But where shall we find the Cat's Cradle? There are cats enough about the old house, but I think they kitten without the ceremony of bed or cradle."

"We were best ask Hutcheon," said my gudesire ; "he kens a' the odd corners about us weel as—another serving-man that is now gane, and that I wad not like to name."

Awcel, Hutcheon, when he was asked, told them, that a ruinous turret, lang disused, next to the clock-house, only accessible by a ladder, for

the opening was on the outside, and far above the battlements, was called of old the Cat's Cradle.

"There will I go immediately," said Sir John; and he took (with what purpose, Heaven kens,) one of his father's pistols from the hall-table, where they had lain since the night he died, and hastened to the battlements.

It was a dangerous place to climb, for the ladder was auld and frail, and wanted ane or twa rounds. However, up got Sir John, and entered at the turret door, where his body stopped the only little light that was in the bit turret. Something flees at him wi' a vengeance, maist dang him back ower—bang gaed the knight's pistol, and Hutcheon, that held the ladder, and my gudesire that stood beside him, hears a loud skelloch. A minute after, Sir John flings the body of the jack-an-ape down to them, and cries that the siller is fund, and that they should come up and help him. And there was the bag of siller sure aneugh, and mony orra things besides, that had been missing for mony a day. And Sir John, when he had riped the turret weel, led my gudesire into the dining-parlour,

and took him by the hand, and spoke kindly to him, and said he was sorry he should have doubted his word, and that he would hereafter be a good master to him, to make amends.

"And now, Steenie," said Sir John, "although this vision of yours tends, on the whole, to my father's credit, as an honest man, that he should, even after his death, desire to see justice done to a poor man like you, yet you are sensible that ill-dispositioned men might make bad constructions upon it, concerning his soul's health. So, I think, we had better lay the hail dirdum on that ill-deedie creature, Major Weir, and say naething about your dream in the wood of Pitmurkie. You had taken ower mickle brandy to be very certain about onything; and, Steenie, this receipt, (his hand shook while he held it out) —it's but a queer kind of document, and we will do best, I think, to put it quietly in the fire."

"Od, but for as queer as it is, it's a' the voucher I have for my rent," said my gudesire, who was afraid, it may be, of losing the benefit of Sir Robert's discharge.

"I will bear the contents to your credit in the

rental-book, and give you a discharge under my own hand," said Sir John, "and that on the spot. And, Steenie, if you can hold your tongue about this matter, you shall sit, from this term downward, at an easier rent."

"Mony thanks to your honour," said Steenie, who saw easily in what corner the wind sat; "doubtless I will be conformable to all your honour's commands; only I would willingly speak wi' some powerful minister on the subject, for I do not like the sort of summons of appointment whilk your honour's father——"

"Do not call the phantom my father!" said Sir John, interrupting him.

"Weel, then, the thing that was so like him," —said my gudesire; "he spoke of my coming back to him this time twelvemonth, and it's a weight on my conscience."

"Aweel, then," said Sir John, "if you be so much distressed in mind, you may speak to our minister of the parish; he is a douce man, regards the honour of our family, and the mair that he may look for some patronage from me."

Wi' that, my father readily agreed that the receipt should be burnt, and the Laird threw it into the chimney with his ain hand. Burn it would not for them, though; but away it flew up the lumm, wi' a lang train of sparks at its tail, and a hissing noise like a squib.

My gudesire gaed down to the Manse, and the minister, when he had heard the story, said, it was his real opinion, that though my gudesire had gaen very far in tampering with dangerous matters, yet, as he had refused the devil's arles, (for such was the offer of meat and drink,) and had refused to do homage by piping at his bidding, he hoped, that if he held a circumspect walk hereafter, Satan could take little advantage by what was come and gane. And, indeed, my gudesire, of his ain accord, lang forswore baith the pipes and the brandy—it was not even till the year was out, and the fatal day passed, that he would so much as take the fiddle, or drink usquebaugh or tippenny.

Sir John made up his story about the jack-an-ape as he liked himsell; and some believe till this

day there was no more in the matter than the filching nature of the brute. Indeed ye'll no hinder some to threap, that it was nane o' the Auld Enemy that Dougal and my gudesire saw in the Laird's room, but only that wanchancy creature, the Major, capering on the coffin; and that, as to the blawing on the Laird's whistle that was heard after he was dead, the filthy brute could do that as weel as the Laird himsell, if no better. But Heaven kens the truth, whilk first came out by the minister's wife, after Sir John and her ain gudeman were baith in the moulds. And then my gudesire, wha was failed in his limbs, but not in his judgment or memory—at least nothing to speak of—was obliged to tell the real narrative to his friends, for the credit of his gude name. He might else have been charged for a warlock."

The shades of evening were growing thicker around us as my conductor finished his long narrative with this moral—" Ye see, birkie, it is nae

chancy thing to tak a stranger traveller for a guide, when ye are in an uncouth land."

"I should not have made that inference," said I. "Your grandfather's adventure was fortunate for himself, whom it saved from ruin and distress; and fortunate for his landlord also, whom it prevented from committing a gross act of injustice."

"Ay, but they had baith to sup the sauce o't sooner or later," said Wandering Willie—"What was fristed wasna forgiven. Sir John died before he was much over threescore; and it was just like of a moment's illness. And for my gudesire, though he departed in the fullness of years, yet there was my father, a yauld man of forty-five, fell down betwixt the stilts of his pleugh, and raise never again, and left nae bairn but me, a puir sightless, fatherless, motherless creature, could neither work nor want. Things gaed weel aneugh at first; for Sir Redwald Redgauntlet, the only son of Sir John, and the oye of auld Sir Robert, and, waes me! the last of the honourable house, took the farm aff our hands, and brought me into his household to have care of me. He liked music,

and I had the best teachers baith England and Scotland could gie me. Mony a merry year was I wi' him! but waes me! he gaed out with other pretty men in the forty-five—I'll say nae mair about it—My head never settled weel since I lost him; and if I say another word about it, de'il a bar will I have the heart to play the night.—Look out, my gentle chap," he resumed in a different tone, "ye should see the lights in Brokenburn Glen by this time."



LETTER XII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME. JUNE

I CONTINUE to scribble at length, though the subject may seem somewhat deficient in interest. Let the grace of the narrative, therefore, and the concern we take in each other's matters, make amends for its tenuity. We fools of fancy, who suffer ourselves, like Malvolio, to be cheated with our own visions, have, nevertheless, this advantage over the wise ones of the earth, that we have our whole stock of enjoyments under our own command, and can dish for ourselves an intellectual banquet with most moderate assistance from external objects. It is, to be sure, something like the feast which the Barmecide served up to Alnaschar; and we cannot be ex-

pected to get fat upon such diet. But then, neither is there repletion or nausea, which often succeed the grosser and more material revel. On the whole, I still pray, with the Ode to Castle Building—

> Give me thy hope which sickens not the heart;
> Give me thy wealth which has no wings to fly;
> Give me the bliss thy visions can impart;
> Thy friendship give me, warm in poverty.

And so, despite thy solemn smile and sapient shake of the head, I will go on picking such interest as I can out of my trivial adventures, even though that interest should be the creation of my own fancy; nor will I cease to inflict on thy devoted eyes the labour of perusing the scrolls in which I shall record my narrative.

My last broke off as we were on the point of descending into the glen at Brokenburn, by the dangerous track which I had first travelled *en croupe*, behind a furious horseman, and was now again to brave under the precarious guidance of a blind man.

It was now getting dark; but this was no inconvenience to my guide, who moved on, as formerly, with instinctive security of step, so that we

soon reached the bottom, and I could see lights twinkling in the cottage which had been my place of refuge on a former occasion. It was not thither, however, that our course was directed. We left the habitation of the Laird to the left, and turning down the brook, soon approached the small hamlet which had been erected at the mouth of the stream, probably on account of the convenience which it afforded as a harbour to the fishing-boats. A large, low cottage, full in our front, seemed highly illuminated; for the light not only glanced from every window and aperture in its frail walls, but was even visible from rents and fractures in the roof, composed of tarred shingles, repaired in part by thatch and *divot.*

While these appearances engaged my attention, that of my companion was attracted by a regular succession of sounds, like a bouncing on the floor, mixed with a very faint sound of music, which Willie's acute organs at once recognized and accounted for, while to me it was almost inaudible. The old man struck the earth with his staff in a violent passion. "The whoreson fisher rabble! They have brought another violer upon

my walk! They are such smuggling blackguards, that they must run in their very music; but I'll sort them waur than ony gauger in the county. —Stay—hark—it's no a violin neither—it's the pipe and tabor bastard, Simon of Sowport, frae the Nicol Forest; but I'll pipe and tabor him!—Let me hae ance my left hand on his cravat, and ye shall see what my right will do. Come away, chap—come away, gentle chap—nae time to be picking and waling your steps." And on he passed with long and determined strides, dragging me along with him.

I was not quite easy in his company; for, now that his minstrel pride was hurt, the man had changed from the quiet, decorous, I might almost say respectable person, which he seemed while he told his tale, into the appearance of a fierce, brawling, dissolute stroller. So that when he entered the large hut, where a great number of fishers, with their wives and daughters, were engaged in eating, drinking, and dancing, I was somewhat afraid that the impatient violence of my companion might procure us an indifferent reception.

But the universal shout of welcome with which Wandering Willie was received—the hearty congratulations—the repeated "Here's t'ye, Willie," —"Whare hae ye been, ye blind deevil?" and the call upon him to pledge them—above all, the speed with which the obnoxious pipe and tabor were put to silence, gave the old man such effectual assurance of undiminished popularity and importance, as at once put his jealousy to rest, and changed his tone of offended dignity, into one better fitted to receive such cordial greetings. Young men and women crowded round, to tell how much they were afraid some mischance had detained him, and how two or three young fellows had set out in quest of him.

"It was nae mischance, praised be Heaven," said Willie, "but the absence of the lazy loon Rob the Rambler, my comrade, that didna come to meet me on the Links; but I hae gotten a braw consort in his stead, worth a dozen of him, the unhanged blackguard."

"And wha is't tou's gotten, Wullie lad?" said half a score of voices, while all eyes were turned on your humble servant, who kept the best coun-

tenance he could, though not quite easy at becoming the centre to which all eyes were pointed.

"I ken him by his hemmed cravat," said one fellow; "it's Gil Hobson, the souple tailor frae Burgh.—Ye are welcome to Scotland, ye prick-the-clout loon," he said, thrusting forth a paw much the colour of a badger's back, and of most portentous dimensions.

"Gil Hobson? Gil whoreson!" exclaimed Wandering Willie; "it's a gentle chap that I judge to be an apprentice wi' auld Joshua Geddes, to the quaker-trade."

"What trade be's that, man?" said he of the badger-coloured fist.

"Canting and lying,"—said Willie, which produced a thundering laugh; "but I am teaching the callant a better trade, and that is, feasting and fiddling."

Willie's conduct, in thus announcing something like my real character, was contrary to compact; and yet I was rather glad he did so, for the consequence of putting a trick upon these rude and ferocious men, might, in case of discovery, have been dangerous to us both, and I was at the same

time delivered from the painful effort to support a fictitious character. The good company, except perhaps one or two of the young women, whose looks expressed some desire for better acquaintance, gave themselves no farther trouble about me; but, while the seniors resumed their places near an immense bowl, or rather reeking cauldron of brandy-punch, the younger arranged themselves on the floor, and called loudly on Willie to strike up.

With a brief caution to me, to "mind my credit, for fishers had ears, though fish have none," Willie led off in capital style, and I followed, certainly not so as to disgrace my companion, who, every now and then, gave me a nod of approbation. The dances were, of course, the Scottish jigs, and reels, and "twasom dances," with a strathspey or hornpipe for interlude; and the want of grace, on the part of the performers, was amply supplied by truth of ear, vigour and decision of step, and the agility proper to the northern performers. My own spirits rose with the mirth around me, and with old Willie's admirable execution, and frequent "weel dune, gentle

chap, yet;"—and, to confess the truth, I felt a great deal more pleasure in this rustic revel, than I have done at the more formal balls and concerts in your famed city, to which I have sometimes made my way. Perhaps this was, because I was a person of more importance to the presiding matron of Brokenburn-foot, than I had the means of rendering myself to the far-famed Miss Nickie Murray, the patroness of your Edinburgh assemblies. The person I mean was a buxom dame of about thirty, her fingers loaded with many a silver ring, and three or four of gold; her ancles liberally displayed from under her numerous blue, white, and scarlet short petticoats, and attired in hose of the finest and whitest lamb-wool, which arose from shoes of Spanish cordwain, fastened with silver buckles. She took the lead in my favour, and declared, that "the brave young gentleman should not weary himsell to death wi' playing, but take the floor for a dance or twa."

"And what's to come of me, Dame Martin?" said Willie.

"Come o' thee?" said the dame; "mischanter on the auld beard o' ye! ye could play for

twenty hours on end, and tire out the hail country-side wi' dancing before ye laid down your bow, saving for a bye drink or the like o' that."

"In troth, dame," answered Willie, "ye are nae sae far wrang; sae if my comrade is to take his dance, ye maun gie me my drink, and then bob it away like Madge of Middlebie."

The drink was soon brought; but while Willie was partaking of it, a party entered the hut, which arrested my attention at once, and intercepted the intended gallantry with which I had proposed to present my hand to the fresh-coloured, well-made, white-ancled Thetis, who had obtained me manumission from my musical task.

This was nothing less than the sudden appearance of the old woman whom the Laird had termed Mabel; Cristal Nixon, his male attendant; and the young person who had said grace to us when I supped with him.

This young person—Alan, thou art in thy way a bit of a conjuror—this young person whom I *did not* describe, and whom you, for that very reason, suspected was not an indifferent object to me—

is, I am sorry to say it, in very fact not so much so as in prudence she ought. I will not use the name of *love* on this occasion; for I have applied it too often to transient whims and fancies to escape your satire, should I venture to apply it now. For it is a phrase, I must confess, which I have used—a romancer would say profaned—a little too often, considering how few years have passed over my head. But seriously, the fair chaplain of Brokenburn has been often in my head when she had no business there; and if this can give thee any clew for explaining my motives in lingering about the country, and assuming the character of Willie's companion, why, hang thee, thou art welcome to make use of it—a permission for which thou need'st not thank me much, as thou wouldst not have failed to assume it, whether it were given or no.

Such being my feelings, conceive how they must have been excited, when, like a beam upon a cloud, I saw this uncommonly beautiful girl enter the apartment in which they were dancing; not, however, with the air of an equal, but that of a superior, come to grace with her presence

the festival of her dependants. The old man and woman attended, with looks as sinister as hers were lovely, like two of the worst winter months waiting upon the bright-eyed May.

When she entered—wonder if thou wilt—she wore *a green mantle*, such as thou hast described as the garb of thy fair client, and confirmed what I had partly guessed from thy personal description, that my chaplain and thy visitor were the same person. There was an alteration on her brow the instant she recognized me. She gave her cloak to her female attendant, and, after a momentary hesitation, as if uncertain whether to advance or retire, she walked into the room with dignity and composure, all making way, the men unbonneting, and the women curtsying respectfully, as she assumed a chair which was reverently placed for her accommodation, apart from others.

There was then a pause, until the bustling mistress of the ceremonies, with awkward, but kindly courtesy, offered the young lady a glass of wine, which was at first declined, and at length only thus far accepted, that, bowing round to

the festive company, the fair visitor wished them all health and mirth, and just touching the brim with her lip, replaced it on the salver. There was another pause; and I did not immediately recollect, confused as I was by this unexpected apparition, that it belonged to me to break it. At length a murmur was heard around me, being expected to exhibit,—nay, to lead down the dance,—in consequence of the previous conversation.

"De'il's in the fiddler lad," was muttered from more quarters than one—"saw folk ever sic a thing as a shame-faced fiddler before?"

At length a venerable Triton, seconding his remonstrances with a hearty thump on my shoulder, cried out, "To the floor—to the floor, and let us see how ye can fling—the lasses are a' waiting."

Up I jumped, sprung from the elevated station which constituted our orchestra, and, arranging my ideas as rapidly as I could, advanced to the head of the room, and, instead of offering my hand to the white-footed Thetis aforesaid, I venturously made the same proposal to her of the Green Mantle

The nymph's lovely eyes seemed to open with astonishment at the audacity of this offer; and, from the murmurs I heard around me, I also understood that it surprised, and perhaps offended, the bye-standers. But after the first moment's emotion, she wreathed her neck, and drawing herself haughtily up, like one who was willing to shew that she was sensible of the full extent of her own condescension, extended her hand towards me, like a princess gracing a squire of low degree.

There is affectation in all this, thought I to myself, if the Green Mantle has borne true evidence—for young ladies do not make visits, or write letters to counsel learned in the law, to interfere in the motions of those whom they hold as cheap as this nymph seems to do me; and if I am cheated by a resemblance of cloaks, still I am interested to shew myself, in some degree, worthy of the favour she has granted with so much state and reserve.—The dance to be performed was the old Scots Jigg, in which you are aware I used to play no sorry figure at La Pique's, when thy clumsy movements used to be rebuked by raps over the knuckles with that great pro-

fessor's fiddle-stick. The choice of the tune was left to my comrade Willie, who, having finished his drink, feloniously struck up the well-known and popular measure,

> " Merrily danced the Quaker's wife,
> And merrily danced the Quaker."

An astounding laugh arose at my expense, and I should have been annihilated, but that the smile which mantled on the lip of my partner, had a different expression from that of ridicule, and seemed to say, " Do not take this to heart." And I did not, Alan—my partner danced admirably, and I like one who was determined, if outshone, which I could not help, not to be altogether thrown into the shade.

I assure you our performance, as well as Willie's music, deserved more polished spectators and auditors ; but we could not then have been greeted with such enthusiastic shouts of applause as attended while I handed my partner to her seat, and took my place by her side, as one who had a right to offer the attentions usual on such an occasion. She was visibly embarrassed, but I was determined not to observe her confusion, and

to avail myself of the opportunity of learning whether this beautiful creature's mind was worthy of the casket in which Nature had lodged it.

Nevertheless, however courageously I formed this resolution, you cannot but too well guess the difficulties I must needs have felt in carrying it into execution; since want of habitual intercourse with the charmers of the other sex has rendered me a sheepish cur, only one grain less awkward than thyself. Then she was so very beautiful, and assumed an air of so much dignity, that I was like to fall under the fatal error of supposing she should only be addressed with something very clever; and in the hasty racking which my brains underwent in this persuasion, not a single idea occurred that common sense did not reject as fustian on the one hand, or weary, flat, and stale triticism on the other. I felt as if my understanding were no longer my own, but was alternately under the dominion of Aldiborontophoscophornio, and that of his facetious friend Rigdum-Funnidos. How did I envy at that moment our friend Jack Oliver, who produces with such happy complacence his fardel of small talk, and who, as he

never doubts his own powers of affording amusement, passes them current with every pretty woman he approaches, and fills up the intervals of chat by his complete acquaintance with the exercise of the fan, the *flaçon*, and the other duties of the *Cavaliere Serviente*. Some of these I attempted, but I suppose it was awkwardly; at least the Lady Greenmantle received them as a princess accepts the homage of a clown.

Meantime the floor remained empty, and as the mirth of the good meeting was somewhat checked, I ventured, as a dernier resort, to propose a minuet. She thanked me, and told me haughtily enough, "she was here to encourage the harmless pleasures of these good folks, but was not disposed to make an exhibition of her own indifferent dancing for their amusement."

She paused a moment, as if she expected me to suggest something; and as I remained silent and rebuked, she bowed her head more graciously, and said, "Not to affront you, however, a country dance, if you please."

What an ass was I, Alan, not to have anticipated her wishes! Should I not have observed

that the ill-favoured couple, Mabel and Cristal, had placed themselves on each side of her seat, like the supporters of the royal arms? the man, thick, short, shaggy, and hirsute, as the lion; the female, skin-dried, tight-laced, long, lean, and hungry-faced, like the unicorn. I ought to have recollected, that under the close inspection of two such watchful salvages, our communication, while in repose, could not have been easy; that the period of dancing a minuet was not the very choicest time for conversation; but that the noise, the exercise, and the mazy confusion of a country-dance, where the inexperienced performers were every now and then running against each other, and compelling the other couples to stand still for a minute at a time, besides the more regular repose afforded by the intervals of the dance itself, gave the best possible openings for a word or two spoken in season, and without being liable to observation.

We had but just led down, when an opportunity of the kind occurred, and my partner said, with great gentleness and modesty, "It is not perhaps very proper in me to acknowledge an ac-

quaintance that is not claimed; but I believe I speak to Mr Darsie Latimer."

"Darsie Latimer was indeed the person that had now the honour and happiness——"

I would have gone on in the false gallop of compliment, but she cut me short. "And why," she said, "is Mr Latimer here, and in disguise, or at least assuming an office unworthy of a man of education?—I beg pardon," she continued,—"I would not give you pain, but surely making an associate of a person of that description——"

She looked towards my friend Willie, and was silent. I felt heartily ashamed of myself, and hastened to say it was an idle frolic, which want of occupation had suggested, and which I could not regret, since it had procured me the pleasure I at present enjoyed.

Without seeming to notice my compliment, she took the next opportunity to say, "Will Mr Latimer permit a stranger who wishes him well to ask, whether it is right that, at his active age, he should be in so far void of occupation, as to be ready to adopt low society for the sake of idle amusement?"

"You are severe, madam," I answered; "but I cannot think myself degraded by mixing with any society where I meet——"

Here I stopped short, conscious that I was giving my answer an unhandsome turn. The *argumentum ad hominem*, the last to which a polite man has recourse, may however be justified by circumstances, but seldom or never the *argumentum ad fœminam*.

She filled up the blank herself which I had left. "Where you meet *me*, I suppose you would say? But the case is different. I am, from my unhappy fate, obliged to move by the will of others, and to be in places which I would by my own will gladly avoid. Besides, I am, except for these few minutes, no participator of the revels—a spectator only, and attended by my servants. Your situation is different—you are here by choice, the partaker and minister of the pleasures of a class below you in education, birth, and fortunes.—If I speak harshly, Mr Latimer," she added, with much sweetness of manner, "I mean kindly."

I was confounded by her speech, "severe in

youthful wisdom;" all of naive or lively, suitable to such a dialogue, vanished from my recollection, and I answered, with gravity like her own, "I am, indeed, better educated than these poor people; but you, madam, whose kind admonition I am grateful for, must know more of my condition than I do myself—I dare not say I am their superior in birth, since I know nothing of my own, or in fortunes, over which hangs an impenetrable cloud."

"And why should your ignorance on these points drive you into low society and idle habits?" answered my female monitor. "Is it manly to wait till fortune cast her beams upon you, when by exertion of your own energy you might distinguish yourself?—Do not the pursuits of learning lie open to you—of manly ambition—of war?—But no—not of war, that has already cost you too dear."

"I will be what you wish me to be," I replied with eagerness—"You have but to choose my path, and you shall see if I do not pursue it with energy, were it only because you command me."

"Not because I command you," said the maiden, "but because reason, common sense,

manhood, and, in one word, regard for your own safety, give the same counsel."

"At least permit me to reply, that reason and sense never assumed a fairer form—of persuasion," I hastily added; for she turned from me—nor did she give me another opportunity of continuing what I had to say till the next pause of the dance, when, determined to bring our dialogue to a point, I said, "You mentioned manhood also, madam, and, in the same breath, personal danger. My ideas of manhood suggest that it is cowardice to retreat before dangers of a doubtful character. You, who appear to know so much of my fortunes that I might call you my guardian angel, tell me what these dangers are, that I may judge whether manhood calls on me to face or to fly them."

She was evidently perplexed by this appeal.

"You make me pay dearly for acting as your humane adviser," she replied at last: "I acknowledge an interest in your fate, and yet I dare not tell you whence it arises; neither am I at liberty to say why or from whom you are in danger; but it is not less true that danger is near and imminent. Ask me no more, but, for your own sake

begone from this country. Elsewhere you are safe—here you do but invite your fate."

"But, am I doomed to bid thus farewell to almost the only human being who has shewed an interest in my welfare?—Do not say so—say that we shall meet again, and the hope shall be the leading star to regulate my course."

"It is more than probable," she said—"much more than probable, that we may never meet again. The help which I now render you is all that may be in my power; it is such as I should render to a blind man whom I might observe approaching the verge of a precipice; it ought to excite no surprise, and requires no gratitude."

So saying, she again turned from me, nor did she address me until the dance was on the point of ending, when she said, "Do not attempt to speak to, or approach me again in the course of the night; leave the company as soon as you can, but not abruptly, and God be with you."

I handed her to her seat, and did not quit the fair palm I held, without expressing my feelings by a gentle pressure. She coloured slightly, and withdrew her hand, but not angrily. Seeing the eyes of Cristal and Mabel sternly fixed on me, I

bowed deeply and withdrew from her; my heart saddening, and my eyes becoming dim in spite of me, as the shifting crowd hid us from each other.

It was my intention to have crept back to my comrade Willie, and resumed my bow with such spirit as I might, although, at the moment, I would have given half my income for an instant's solitude. But my retreat was cut off by Dame Martin, with the frankness—if it is not an inconsistent phrase—of rustic coquetry, that goes straight up to the point.

"Ay, lad, ye seem unca sune weary to dance sae lightly? Better the nag that ambles a' the day, than him that makes a brattle for a mile, and then's done wi' the road."

This was a fair challenge, and I could not decline accepting it. Besides, I could see Dame Martin was queen of the revels; and so many were the rude and singular figures about me, that I was by no means certain whether I might not need some protection. I seized on her willing hand, and we took our places in the dance, where, if I did not acquit myself with all the ac-

curacy of step and movement which I had before attempted, I at least came up to the expectations of my partner, who said, and almost swore, "I was prime at it;" while, stimulated to her utmost exertions, she herself frisked like a kid, snapped her fingers like castanets, whooped like a Bacchanal, and bounded from the floor like a tennis-ball, —ay, till the colour of her garters was no particular mystery. She made the less secret of this, perhaps, that they were sky-blue, and fringed with silver.

The time has been that this would have been special fun; or rather, last night was the only time I can recollect these four years when it would *not* have been so; yet, at this moment, I cannot tell you how I longed to be rid of Dame Martin. I almost wished she would sprain one of those "many-twinkling" ancles, which served her so alertly; and when, in the midst of her exuberant caprioling, I saw my former partner leaving the apartment, and with eyes, as I thought, turning towards me, this unwillingness to carry on the dance increased to such a point, that I was almost about to feign a sprain or a dis-

location myself, in order to put an end to the performance. But there were around me scores of old women, all of whom looked as if they might have some sovereign recipe for such an accident; and, remembering Gil Blas and his pretended disorder in the robbers' cavern, I thought it as wise to play Dame Martin fair, and dance till she thought proper to dismiss me. What I did I resolved to do strenuously, and in the latter part of the exhibition, I cut and sprang from the floor as high and as perpendicularly as Dame Martin herself; and received, I promise you, thunders of applause, for the common people always prefer exertion and agility to grace. At length Dame Martin could dance no more, and, rejoicing at my release, I led her to a seat, and took the privilege of a partner to attend her.

"Hegh, sirs," exclaimed Dame Martin, "I am sair forfoughen! Troth, callant, I think ye hae been amaist the death o' me."

I could only atone for the alleged offence by fetching her some refreshment, of which she readily partook.

"I have been lucky in my partners," I said,

"first that pretty young lady, and then you, Mrs Martin."

"Hout wi' your fleeching," said Dame Martin. "Gae wa—gae wa, lad; dinna blaw in folks lugs that gate; me and Miss Lilias even'd thegither! Na, na, lad—od, she is maybe four or five years younger than the like o' me,—bye and attour her gentle havings."

"She is the Laird's daughter?" said I, in as careless a tone of inquiry as I could assume.

"His daughter, man? Na, na, only his niece—and sib aneugh to him, I think."

"Ay, indeed," I replied; "I thought she had borne his name?"

"She bears her ain name, and that's Lilias."

"And has she no other name?" asked I.

"What needs she another till she gets a gudeman?" answered my Thetis, a little miffed perhaps—to use the women's phrase—that I turned the conversation upon my former partner, rather than addressed it to herself.

There was a little pause, which was interrupted by Dame Martin observing, "They are standing up again."

"True," said I, having no mind to renew my late violent *capriole*, "and I must go help old Willie."

Ere I could extricate myself, I heard poor Thetis address herself to a sort of Mer-man in a jacket of seamen's blue, and a pair of trowsers, (whose hand, by the way, she had rejected at an earlier part of the evening,) and intimate that she was now disposed to take a trip.

"Trip away then, dearie," said the vindictive man of the waters, without offering his hand; "there," pointing to the floor, "is a roomy birth for you."

Certain I had made one enemy, and perhaps two, I hastened to my original seat beside Willie, and began to handle my bow. But I could see that my conduct had made an unfavourable impression; the words, "flory conceited chap,"—"haflins gentle," and at length, the still more alarming epithet of "spy," began to be buzzed about, and I was heartily glad when the apparition of Sam's visage at the door, who was already possessed of and draining a can of punch, gave me assurance that my means of retreat were at

hand. I intimated as much to Willie, who probably had heard more of the murmurs of the company than I had, for he whispered, " Ay, ay—awa wi' ye—ower lang here—slide out canny —dinna let them see ye are on the tramp."

I slipped half-a-guinea into the old man's hand, who answered, " Truts! pruts! nonsense! but I'se no refuse, trusting ye can afford it.—Awa wi' ye—and if onybody stops ye cry on me."

I glided, by his advice, along the room as if looking for a partner, joined Sam, whom I disengaged with some difficulty from his can, and we left the cottage together in a manner to attract the least possible observation. The horses were tied in a neighbouring shed, and as the moon was up and I was now familiar with the road, broken and complicated as it is, we soon reached the Shepherd's Bush, where the old landlady was sitting up waiting for us, under some anxiety of mind, to account for which she did not hesitate to tell me that some folks had gone to Brokenburn from her house, or neighbouring towns, that did not come so safe back

again. "Wandering Willie," she said, "was doubtless a kind of protection."

Here Willie's wife, who was smoking in the chimney corner, took up the praises of her "hinny," as she called him, and endeavoured to awaken my generosity afresh, by describing the dangers from which, as she was pleased to allege, her husband's countenance had assuredly been the means of preserving me. I was not, however, to be fooled out of more money at this time, and went to bed in haste, full of various cogitations.

I have since spent a couple of days betwixt Mount Sharon and this place, and betwixt reading, writing to thee this momentous history, forming plans for seeing the lovely Lilias, and—partly, I think, for the sake of contradiction—angling a little in spite of Joshua's scruples—though I am rather liking the amusement better as I begin to have some success in it.

And now, my dearest Alan, you are in full possession of my secret—let me as frankly into the recesses of your bosom. How do you feel towards this fair ignis fatuus, this lily of the de-

sert? Tell me honestly; for however the recollection of her may haunt my own mind, my love for Alan Fairford surpasses the love of woman. I know, too, that when you *do* love, it will be to

"Love once and love no more."

A deep-consuming passion, once kindled in a breast so steady as yours, would never be extinguished but with life. I am of another and more volatile temper, and though I shall open your next with a trembling hand, and uncertain heart, yet let it bring a frank confession that this fair unknown has made a deeper impression on your gravity than you reckoned for, and you will see I can tear the arrow from my own wound, barb and all. In the meantime, though I have formed schemes once more to see her, I will, you may rely on it, take no step for putting them into practice. I have refrained from this hitherto, and I give you my word of honour, I shall continue to do so; yet why should you need any further assurance from one who is so entirely yours as

D. L.

P. S.—I shall be on thorns till I receive your answer. I read, and re-read your letter, and cannot for my soul discover what your real sentiments are. Sometimes I think you write of her as one in jest—and sometimes I think that cannot be. Put me at ease as soon as possible.

LETTER XIII.

ALAN FAIRFORD TO DARSIE LATIMER.

I WRITE on the instant, as you direct; and in a tragi-comic humour, for I have a tear in my eye, and a smile on my cheek. Dearest Darsie, sure never a being but yourself could be so generous—sure never a being but yourself could be so absurd! I remember when you were a boy you wished to make your fine new whip a present to old aunt Peggy, merely because she admired it; and now, with like unreflecting and unappropriate liberality, you would resign your beloved to a smoke-dried young sophister, who cares not one of the hairs which it is his occupation to split for all the daughters of Eve.

I in love with your Lilias—your green mantle—your unknown enchantress!—why I scarce saw her for five minutes, and even then only the tip of her chin was distinctly visible. She was well made, and the tip of her chin was of a most promising cast for the rest of the face; but, Heaven save you! she came upon business! and for a lawyer to fall in love with a pretty client on a single consultation, would be as wise as if he became enamoured of a particularly bright sunbeam which chanced for a moment to gild his bar-wig. I give you my word I am heart-whole; and moreover, I assure you, that before I suffer a woman to sit near my heart's core, I must see her full face, without mask or mantle, ay, and know a good deal of her mind into the bargain. So never fret yourself on my account, my kind and generous Darsie; but, for your own sake, have a care, and let not an idle attachment, so lightly taken up, lead you into serious danger.

On this subject I feel so apprehensive, that now when I am decorated with the honours of the gown, I should have abandoned my career

at the very starting to come to you, but for my father having contrived to clog my heels with fetters of a professional nature. I will tell you the matter at length, for it is comical enough; and why should not you list to my juridical adventures, as well as I to those of your fiddling knight errantry?

It was after dinner, and I was considering how I might best introduce to my father the private resolution I had formed to set off for Dumfries-shire, or whether I had not better run away at once, and plead my excuse by letter, when, assuming the peculiar look with which he communicates any of his intentions respecting me, which he suspects may not be altogether acceptable, "Alan," he said, "ye now wear a gown—ye have opened shop, as we would say of a more mechanical profession; and, doubtless, ye think the floor of the courts is strewed with guineas, and that ye have only to stoop down to gather them."

"I hope I am sensible, sir," I replied, "that I have some knowledge and practice to acquire, and must stoop for that in the first place."

"It is well said," answered my father; and. always afraid to give too much encouragement, added, "Very well said, if it be well acted up to —Stoop to get knowledge and practice is the very word. Ye know very well, Alan, that in the other faculty who study the *Ars medendi*, before the young doctor gets to the bedsides of palaces, he must, as they call it, walk the hospitals; and cure Lazarus of his sores, before he be admitted to prescribe for Dives, when he has gout or indigestion——"

"I am aware, sir, that——"

"Whisht—do not interrupt the court—Well —also the chirurgeons have an useful practice, by which they put their apprentices and *tyrones* to work upon senseless dead bodies, to which, as they can do no good, so they certainly can do as little harm; while at the same time the *tyro*, or apprentice, gains experience, and becomes fit to whip off a leg or arm from a living subject, as cleanly as ye would slice an onion."

"I believe I guess your meaning, sir," answered I; "and were it not for a very particular engagement——"

"Do not speak to me of engagements; but whisht—there is a good lad—and do not interrupt the court."

My father, you know, is apt—be it said with all filial duty—to be a little prolix in his harangues. I had nothing for it but to lean back and listen.

"Maybe you think, Alan, because I have, doubtless, the management of some actions in dependence, whilk my worthy clients have intrusted me with, that I may think of airting them your way *instanter;* and so setting you up in practice, so far as my small business or influence may go; and, doubtless, Alan, that is a day whilk I hope may come round. But then, before I give, as the proverb hath it, 'My own fish-guts to my own sea-maws,' I must, for the sake of my own character, be very sure that my sea-maw can pick them to some purpose. What say ye?"

"I am so far," answered I, "from wishing to get early into practice, sir, that I would willingly bestow a few days——"

"In farther study, ye would say, Alan. But

that is not the way either—ye must walk the hospitals—ye must cure Lazarus—ye must cut and carve on a departed subject, to shew your skill."

"I am sure," I replied, "I will undertake the cause of any poor man with pleasure, and bestow as much pains upon it as if it were a Duke's; but for the next two or three days——"

"They must be devoted to close study, Alan—very close study indeed; for yé must stand primed for a hearing, *in presentia Dominorum*, upon Tuesday next."

"I, sir!" I replied in astonishment—"I have not opened my mouth in the Outer-House yet."

"Never mind the Court of the Gentiles, man," said my father; "we will have you into the Sanctuary at once—over shoes, over boots."

"But, sir, I should really spoil any cause thrust on me so hastily."

"Ye cannot spoil it, Alan," said my father, rubbing his hands with much complacency; "that is the very cream of the business, man—it is just, as I said before, a subject upon whilk all the *tyrones* have been trying their whittles for

fifteen years; and as there have been about ten or a dozen agents concerned, and each took his own way, the case is come to that pass, that Stair or Arniston could not mend it; and I do not think even you, Alan, can do it much harm—ye may get credit by it, but ye can lose none."

"And pray what is the name of my happy client, sir?" said I, ungraciously enough, I believe.

"It is a well-known name in the Parliament-House," replied my father. "To say the truth, I expect him every moment; it is Peter Peebles."

"Peter Peebles!" exclaimed I, in astonishment; "he is an insane beggar—as poor as Job, and as mad as a March hare!"

"He has been pleaing in the court for fifteen years," said my father, in a tone of commiseration, which seemed to acknowledge that this fact was enough to account for the poor man's condition both in mind and circumstances.

"Besides, sir," I added, "he is on the Poor's Roll; and you know there are advocates regular-

ly appointed to manage those cases; and for me to presume to interfere——"

"Whisht, Alan!—never interrupt the court —all *that* is managed for ye like a tee'd ball, (my father sometimes draws his similies from his once favourite game of golf,)—you must know, Alan, that Peter's cause was to have been opened by young Dumtoustie—ye may ken the lad, a son of Dumtoustie of that ilk, Member of Parliament for the county of ——, and a nephew of the Laird's younger brother, worthy Lord Bladderskate, whilk ye are aware sounds as like being akin to a peatship* and a sheriffdom, as a sieve is sib to a riddle. Now Saunders Drudgeit, my lord's clerk, came to me this morning in the House, like ane bereft of his wits; for it seems that young Dumtoustie is ane of the Poor's Lawyers, and Peter Peebles's process had been remitted to him of course. But so soon as the hair-

* Formerly, a lawyer, supposed to be under the peculiar patronage of any particular judge, was invidiously termed his *peat*, or *pet*.

brained goose saw the pokes, (as, indeed, Alan, they are none of the least,) he took fright, cried for his nag, lap on, and away to the country is he gone; and so, said Saunders, my lord is at his wit's end wi' vexation and shame, to see his nevoy break off the course at the very starting. 'I'll tell you, Saunders,' said I, 'were I my lord, and a friend or kinsman of mine should leave the town while the court was sitting, that kinsman, or be he what he liked, should never darken my door again.' And then, Alan, I thought to turn the ball our own way; and I said that you were a gay sharp birkie, just off the irons, and if it would oblige my lord, and so forth, you would open Peter's cause upon Tuesday, and make some handsome apology for the necessary absence of your learned friend, and the loss which your client and the court had sustained, and so forth. Saunders lap at the proposition, like a cock at a grosart; for he said, the only chance was to get a new hand, that did not ken the charge he was taking upon him; for there was not a lad of two Sessions' standing that was not dead-sick of Peter Peebles and his cause; and he

advised me to break the matter gently to you at the first; but I told him you were a good bairn, Alan, and had no will and pleasure in these matters but mine."

What could I say, Darsie, in answer to this arrangement, so very well meant—so very vexatious at the same time?—To imitate the defection and flight of young Dumtoustie, was at once to destroy my father's hopes of me forever; nay, such is the keenness with which he regards all connected with his profession, it might have been a step to breaking his heart. I was obliged, therefore, to bow in sad acquiescence, when my father called to James Wilkinson to bring the two bits of pokes he would find on his table.

Exit James, and presently re-enters, bending under the load of two huge leathern bags, full of papers to the brim, and labelled on the greasy backs with the magic impress of the clerks of court, and the title, *Peebles against Plainstanes.* This huge mass was deposited on the table, and my father, with no ordinary glee in his countenance, began to draw out the various bundles of papers, secured by none of your red-tape or

whip-cord, but stout, substantial casts or tarred rope, such as might have held small craft at their moorings.

I made a last and desperate effort to get rid of the impending job. "I am really afraid, sir, that this case seems so much complicated, and there is so little time to prepare, that we were better move the Court to supersede it till next Session."

"How, sir?—how, Alan?" said my father—"Would you approbate and reprobate, sir?—You have accepted the poor man's cause, and if you have not his fee in your pocket, it is because he has none to give you; and now would you approbate and reprobate in the same breath of your mouth?—Think of your oath of office, Alan, and your duty to your father, my dear boy."

Once more, what could I say?—I saw, from my father's hurried and alarmed manner, that nothing could vex him so much as failing in the point he had determined to carry, and once more intimated my readiness to do my best, under every disadvantage.

"Well, well, my boy," said my father, "the

Lord will make your days long in the land, for the honour you have given to your father's grey hairs. You may find wiser advisers, Alan, but none that can wish you better."

My father, you know, does not usually give way to expressions of affection, and they are interesting in proportion to their rarity. My eyes began to fill at seeing his glisten; and my delight at having given him such sensible gratification would have been unmixed, but for the thoughts of you. These out of the question, I could have grappled with the bags, had they been as large as corn-sacks. But, to turn what was grave into farce, the door opened, and Wilkinson ushered in Peter Peebles.

You must have seen this original, Darsie, who, like others in the same predicament, continues to haunt the courts of justice, where he has made shipwreck of time, means, and understanding. Such insane paupers have sometimes seemed to me to resemble wrecks lying upon the shoals on the Goodwin Sands, or in Yarmouth Roads, warning other vessels to keep aloof from the banks on which they have been lost; or ra-

their scare-crows and potatoe-bogles, distributed through the courts to scare away fools from the scene of litigation.

The identical Peter wears a huge great-coat, thread-bare and patched itself, yet carefully so disposed and secured by what buttons remain, and many supplementary pins, as to conceal the still more infirm state of his under garments. The shoes and stockings of a ploughman were, however, seen to meet at his knees, with a pair of brownish, blackish breeches; a rusty-coloured handkerchief, that has been black in its day, surrounded his throat, and was an apology for linen His hair, half grey, half black, escaped in elf-locks around a huge wig, made of tow, as it seemed to me, and so much shrunk, that it stood up on the very top of his head; above which he plants, when covered, an immense cocked hat. which, like the chieftain's banner, may be seen any sederunt day betwixt nine and ten, high towering above all the fluctuating and changeful scene in the Outer-House, where his eccentricities often make him the centre of a group of pe-

tulant and teazing boys, who exercise upon him every art of ingenious torment. His countenance, originally that of a portly, comely burgess, is now emaciated with poverty and anxiety, and rendered wild by an insane lightness about the eyes; a withered and blighted skin and complexion; features charged with the self-importance peculiar to insanity; and a habit of perpetually speaking to himself. Such was my unfortunate client; and I must allow, Darsie, that my profession had need to do a great deal of good, if, as is much to be feared, it brings many individuals to such a pass.

After we had been, with a good deal of form, presented to each other, at which time I easily saw by my father's manner that he was desirous of supporting Peter's character in my eyes, as much as circumstances would permit, "Alan," he said, "this is the gentleman who has agreed to accept of you as his counsel, in place of young Dumtoustie."

"Entirely out of favour to my old acquaintance your father," said Peter, with a benign and

patronizing countenance, "out of respect to your father, and my old intimacy with Lord Bladderskate. Otherwise, by the *Regiam Majestatem!* I would have presented a petition and complaint against Daniel Dumtoustie, Advocate, by name and surname—I would, by all the practiques!—I know the forms of process; and I am not to be trifled with."

My father here interrupted my client, and reminded him that there was a good deal of business to do, as he proposed to give the young counsel an outline of the state of the conjoined process, with a view to letting him into the merits of the cause, disencumbered from the points of form. "I have made a short abbreviate, Mr Peebles," said he; "having sat up late last night, and employed much of this morning in wading through these papers, to save Alan some trouble, and I am now about to state the result."

"I will state it myself," said Peter, breaking in without reverence upon his solicitor.

"No, by no means," said my father; "I am your agent for the time."

"Mine eleventh in number," said Peter; "I

have a new one every year; I wish I could get a new coat as regularly."

"Your agent for the time," resumed my father, "and you, who are acquainted with the forms, know that the client states the case to the agent—the agent to the counsel——"

"The counsel to the Lord Ordinary, the Ordinary to the Inner House, the President to the Bench. It is just like the rope to the man, the man to the ox, the ox to the water; the water to the fire——"

"Hush, for Heaven's sake, Mr Peebles," said my father, cutting his recitation short; "time wears on—we must get to business—you must not interrupt the court, you know.—Hem, hem! From this abbreviate it appears——"

"Before you begin," said Peter Peebles, "I'll thank you to order me a morsel of bread and cheese, or some cauld meat, or broth, or the like alimentary provision; I was so anxious to see your son, that I could not eat a mouthful of dinner."

Heartily glad, I believe, to have so good a chance of stopping his client's mouth effectually,

my father ordered some cold meat, to which James Wilkinson, for the honour of the house, was about to add the brandy bottle, which remained on the side-board, but, at a wink from my father, supplied its place with small beer. Peter charged the provisions with the rapacity of a famished lion; and so well did the diversion engage him, that though, while my father stated the case, he looked at him repeatedly, as if he meant to interrupt his statement, yet he always found more agreeable employment for his mouth, and returned to the cold beef with an avidity which convinced me he had not had such an opportunity for many a day of satiating his appetite. Omitting much formal phraseology, and many legal details, I will endeavour to give you, in exchange for your fiddler's tale, the history of a litigant, or rather, the history of his law-suit.

"Peter Peebles and Paul Plainstanes," said my father, "entered into partnership, in the year ——, as mercers and linen drapers, in the Lucken-booths, and carried on a great line of business to mutual advantage. But the learned counsel needeth not to be told, *societas est mater*

discordiarum, partnership oft makes pleaship. The company being dissolved by mutual consent, in the year ——, the affairs had to be wound up, and after certain attempts to settle the matter extra-judicially, it was at last brought into the Court, and has branched out into several distinct processes, most of which have been conjoined by the Ordinary. It is to the state of these processes that counsel's attention is particularly directed. There is the original action of Peebles *v.* Plainstanes, convening him for payment of L.3000, less or more, as alleged balance due by Plainstanes. 2dly, There is a counter action, in which Plainstanes is pursuer and Peebles defender, for L.2500, less or more, being balance alleged *per contra*, to be due by Peebles. 3dly, Mr Peebles's seventh agent advised an action of Compt and Reckoning at his instance, wherein what balance should prove due on either side might be fairly struck and ascertained. 4thly, To meet the hypothetical case, that Peebles might be found liable in a balance to Plainstanes, Mr Wildgoose, Mr Peebles's eighth

agent, recommended a Multiplepoinding, to bring all parties concerned into the field."

My brain was like to turn at this account of lawsuit within lawsuit, like a nest of chip-boxes, with all of which I was expected to make myself acquainted.

"I understand," I said, "that Mr Peebles claims a sum of money from Plainstanes—how then can he be his debtor? and if not his debtor, how can he bring a Multiplepoinding, the very summons of which sets forth, that the pursuer does owe certain monies, which he is desirous to pay by warrant of a judge?"

"Ye know little of the matter, I doubt, friend," said Mr Peebles; "a Multiplepoinding is the safest *remedium juris* in the whole form of process. I have known it conjoined with a declarator of marriage.—Your beef is excellent," he said to my father, who in vain endeavoured to resume his legal disquisition; "but something highly powdered—and the twopenny is undeniable; but it is small swipes—small swipes—more of hop than malt—with your leave I'll try your black bottle."

My father started to help him with his own hand, and in due measure; but, infinitely to my amusement, Peter Peebles got possession of the bottle by the neck, and my father's ideas of hospitality were far too scrupulous to permit his attempting, by any direct means, to redeem it; so that Peter returned to the table triumphant, with his prey in his clutch.

"Better have a wine-glass, Mr Peebles," said my father, in an admonitory tone; "you will find it pretty strong."

"If the kirk is ower muckle, we can sing mass in the quire," said Peter, helping himself in the goblet out of which he had been drinking the small beer. "What is it, usquebaugh?—BRANDY, as I am an honest man! I had almost forgotten the name and taste of brandy.—Mr Fairford elder, your good health, (a mouthful of brandy,)—Mr Alan Fairford, wishing you well through your arduous undertaking, (another go-down of the comfortable liquor)—And now, though you have given a tolerable breviate of this great law-suit, of whilk everybody has heard something that has walked the boards in the Outer-House,

(here's to ye again, by way of interim decreet,) yet ye have omitted to speak a word of the arrestments."

"I was just coming to that point, Mr Peebles."

"Or of the action of suspension of the charge on the bill."

"I was just coming to that."

"Or the advocation of the Sheriff-Court process?"

"I was just coming to it."

"As Tweed comes to Melrose, I think," said the litigant; and then filling his goblet about a quarter full of brandy, as if in absence of mind,—"Oh, Mr Alan Fairford, ye are a lucky man to buckle to such a cause as mine at the very outset! it is like a specimen of all causes, man. By the Regiam, there is not a *remedium juris* in the practiques but ye'll find a spice o't. Here's to your getting weel through with it—Pshut—I am drinking naked spirits, I think. But if the heathen be ower strong we'll christen him with the brewer, (here he added a little small beer to his beverage, paused, rolled his eyes, winked, and

proceeded,)—Mr Fairford—the action of assault and battery, Mr Fairford, when I compelled the villain Plainstanes to pull my nose within two steps of King Charles's statue, in the Parliament Close—there I had him in a hose-net. Never man could tell me how to shape that process—no counsel that ever selled wind could condescend and say whether it were best to proceed by way of petition and complaint *ad vindictam publicam* with consent of his Majesty's advocate, or by action on the statute for battery *pendente lite*, whilk would be the winning my plea at once, and so getting a back-door out of Court.—By the Regiam, that beef and brandy is unco het at my heart—I maun try the ale again, (sipped a little beer); and the ale's but cauld, I maun e'en put in the rest of the brandy."

He was as good as his word, and proceeded in so loud and animated a style of elocution, thumping the table, drinking and snuffing alternately, that my father abandoning all attempts to interrupt him, sat silent and ashamed, suffering and anxious for the conclusion of the scene.

"And then to come back to my pet process

of all—my battery and assault process, when I had the good luck to provoke him to pull my nose at the very threshold of the Court, whilk was the very thing I wanted—Mr Pest, ye ken him. Daddie Fairford kens him. Pest was for making it out hamesucken, for he said the Court might be said—said—ugh!—to be my dwelling place. I dwell mair there than ony gate else, and the essence of hamesucken is to strike a man in his dwelling-place—mind that, young advocates—and so there's hope Plainstanes may be hanged, as many has been for a less matter; for, my Lords,—will Pest say to the Justiciary bodies,—my Lords, the Parliament House is Peebles's place of dwelling, says he—being *commune forum*, and *commune forum est commune domicilium*—Lass, fetch another glass of whisky, and score it—time to gae hame—by the practiques, I cannot find the jug—yet there's twa of them, I think. By the Regiam, Fairford—Daddie Fairford—lend us twal pennies to buy sneeshing, mine is done—Macer, call another cause."

The box fell from his hands, and his body

would at the same time have fallen from the chair, had not I supported him.

"'This is intolerable,' said my father—"Call a chairman, James Wilkinson, to carry this degraded, worthless, drunken beast home."

When Peter Peebles was removed from this memorable consultation, under the care of an able-bodied Celt, my father hastily bundled up the papers, as a showman, whose exhibition has miscarried, hastes to remove his booth. "Here are my memoranda, Alan," he said, in a hurried way; "look them carefully over—compare them with the processes, and turn it in your head before Tuesday. Many a good speech has been made for a beast of a client; and hark ye, lad, hark ye—I never intended to cheat you of your fee when all was done, though I would have liked to have heard the speech first; but there is nothing like corning the horse before the journey. Here are five goud guineas in a silk purse—of your poor mother's netting, Alan—she would have been a blithe woman to have seen her young son with a gown on his back—but no more of that—be a good boy, and to the work like a tiger."

I did set to work, Darsie; for who could resist such motives? With my father's assistance, I have mastered the details, confused as they are; and on Tuesday, I will plead as well for Peter Peebles, as I could for a duke. Indeed, I feel my head so clear on the subject, as to be able to write this long letter to you; into which, however, Peter and his law-suit have insinuated themselves so far, as to show you how much they at present occupy my thoughts. Once more be careful of yourself, and mindful of me, who am ever thine while

ALAN FAIRFORD.

From circumstances, to be hereafter mentioned, it was long ere this letter reached the person to whom it was addressed.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

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